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The Anthology of Restoration Erotic Poetry

EDITED BY ED CRAY

A COMPILATION OF THE BEST POETRY FROM THE MOST EROTIC ERA IN ENGLISH HISTORY. IT IS SOMETIMES BAWDY, SOMETIMES GRAPHIC, SOMETIMES SUGGESTIVE, SOMETIMES CLINICAL; BUT IT ACCURATELY MIRRORS THE SOCIOLOGICAL ATTITUDES OF THE RESTORATION SOCIETY.

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INTRODUCTION

The period in English history marked off by the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603 and the ascension of the Hanoverians to the throne in 1714 was one of political and social turmoil. Historians have charted and plotted the ins and outs of the Stuarts, the rise of Oliver Cromwell, the Restoration of the monarchy, and the eventual ascendency of Parliament. The political and military history of the period is well-known.

The social history too has received its share of attention. The establishment of a large middle class as the backbone of the social structure has been duly noted. The bitter, and ultimately senseless religious antagonism between Catholic and Protestant has been analyzed in infinite detail.

Not so the literary history. After a handful of giant-sized figures—Shakespeare (d. 1616), Milton (d. 1674), Dryden (d. 1700)—little enough is known. There are whole libraries on Shakespeare and Milton, respectable shelves on Pope, Dryden and Donne, but little on such lesser-known poets as Robert Herrick (1591-1674), Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), or the even less well-known Suckling, Lovelace, Cowley and Waller.

Of the anonymous scriveners who annually turned out hundreds of published poems during this time, of the dilettante courtiers who considered it fashionable to produce a well-turned if frequently uninspired poem, we know virtually nothing.

Ironically, no period in English history was so productive. The well-educated man considered it one of the social graces to be able to dash off a few lines with rhymes at appropriate intervals. The

rising middle class, aping the manners of the court, shared this opinion to a great degree. The printing presses turned out hundreds of collections of this poetry. Obviously, they sold well. If they had not, the publishers would have issued something else, since printing, then as now, was a profit-making enterprise.

The major reason that so little of this material has been published in recent times is quite simple. Most of it is erotic, and some of it, by today's standards, is plainly bawdy. It is sometimes graphic, and sometimes suggestive, sometimes clinical, sometimes euphemistic. But the erotic is never far from the surface.

Until now, this poetry has moldered in private collections, or in restricted sections of great libraries. What little has been republished for modern readers has been issued in limited editions, usually numbered, invariably sold at inflated prices to book collectors. The single exception known to the editor was the scholarly reprinting by Princeton University Press of the first known published collection of the Earl of Rochester's poems.

This present collection is a sampling of the better poetry of the most erotic era in English letters. It was culled from literally hundreds of collections issued in the hundred or so years between the death of Elizabeth and the death of Queen Anne, and from a handful of such works published later in the Eighteenth Century which purported to be anthologies of the older poems.

In its own day and age, this poetry was not considered to be "dirty" so much as the escapades it describes were judged to be "scandalous" by the emerging middle class. Samuel Pepys, the very epitome of the rising middle class, kept a coded, private

diary through the Restoration, and here he sharply underscores his indignation at the public offenses of the rakehells who surrounded a rakehellion king. At the same time, Pepys frankly writes of his own erotic attraction to serving girls, prostitutes, one of the king's own mistresses, and casually of his gluttonous tendencies at the board. Notably, the modern reader would find Pepys' indulgent eating habits—not to mention his propensity for relieving an overburdened stomach by the expedient of vomiting—as offensive as his erotic yearnings.

Pepys did not. He lamented the mornings-after from a physical, not a mental anguish. Cultural standards change; as someone has said, "One man's filth is another man's catechism." The values of the Twentieth Century, with its broad streak of Victorian hypocrisy, in the English-speaking world were not the values of the Stuart or Restoration rakes.

Prostitution was rampant, and in spite of the raised eyebrows of the clergy, the whores plied their trade openly. Extra-marital sexual relations were as common then as now, with the significant difference that such affairs were frequently condoned—at least in the court. The man whose wife strayed from her marriage bed was laughed at, not because he couldn't keep the lady under control, but because he couldn't satisfy her sexually in the first place.

Most men of means kept mistresses, usually girls of the lower and middle classes, or farm girls lately come to London. Some of these kept women, such as the actress Nell Gwyn, longtime mistress of Charles II, prospered mightily. Most suffered the inevitable ravages of time, too-frequent debauchery, and venereal disease, ending their meteoric lives in the streets.

The standards of sexual morality prevailing in the

court were not those of the city, and especially of the still-influential Puritans who but a few short years before had failed in their effort to create one of history's innumerable "kingdoms-of-heaven-on-earth."

For one reason, the average citizen could not afford the extravagant immorality of the levy-supported king. Setting a standard for his courtiers to follow, Charles II had at least four mistresses prior to ascending the throne, and, in spite of a queen living in the palace, at least nine more after he was crowned. There were undoubtedly other one-night affairs with women of the court and women of the streets whose contact with royalty has gone unnoticed in history. Charles lavished gifts on these women, and the most favored, such as Barbara Villiers and Louise de Keroualle, received estates, titles and jewels which properly would have befit the queen. Each of Charles' fourteen bastard children was tacitly acknowledged with similar endowments, titles and pensions.

The court was a riotous goat herd. The king's sexual accomplishments were matched by more than one of the rakes who fluttered in and out of the palace. As long as their sexual and scatological play was confined to the court, the public was willing to live and let live, clucking its collective tongue over one or another bit of choice gossip, vicariously enjoying the whole thing. In that regard, the court of Charles II served the same function that the Hollywood of the movie columnists serves three hundred years later.

But when the rakes tried to extend their activities into the town, they ran afoul of common law and outraged decency. Their response, aristoctratic sneering at the "rabble," was defensive; the wayward

courtiers knew that in spite of titles and influence, their unchallenged control of the society had disappeared.

This more than anything else was the major result of the sixteen years of Civil War, and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell. The centuries-old divine right of kings to do and say as they pleased received its death blow with the decapitation of Charles II's father in 1649. As the divine right of kings passed, so did the feudal control of the king's lordlings.

In their place arose a bureaucracy of civil servants, of courts of law, of non-titled ministers and counselors who made governmental decisions. As much as Charles fought against Parliament, especially on fiscal matters, he could not undo the strides made toward democratic government by the overzealous Puritans under Cromwell. Had he attempted to meddle with Parliament seriously, like his father, Charles II would have ended leaning over a chopping block (when his brother, James II, tried, he ended up deposed and in exile).

If he couldn't rule the land without consulting people he little liked and little trusted, Charles could rule the court as he pleased. Perhaps as compensation for his bruised vanity, he shied away from affairs of state, preferring affairs of the boudoir. England's fortunes as a world power wavered; tiny Holland, with its vast fleet, battled the English to a standstill, even administering a black eye to the Lion by sailing up the Thames at one point and insolently cannonading towns at will. Charles was even forced to lean on the King of France for funds and moral support to maintain him in a style to which he, Charles, thought a king was entitled. But even the alliance with the traditional enemy could

not shake the firming hold of Parliament on the practical affairs of government.

England's role as a world power diminished; Parliament kept a firm grip on the purse strings and fretted about domestic matters. Charles II, his courtiers hot in chase, gamboled in ever-increasing sexuality.

The emergent middle class of governmental bureaucrats and ever more wealthy merchants could not share the court's dominant sexuality, no matter how anxious this new middle class was to ape the aristocracy's manners and attitudes. No less sexual, but a good deal more concerned with public appearances, this middle class supported the cheaper whores and kept less extravagant mistresses furtively. Where the court made a mockery of marriage, the middle class paid that institution solid lip-service.

In part, this explains some of the curiosities found in the publication of the poetry in this collection. Written in large part by men of the court and professional writers supported by the court, it was later published—frequently without permission—because of its obvious, voyeuristic possibilities. Sold to a lip-smacking, head-shaking public, this poetry was some of the first commercially produced, upper class scandal sold to the ever-receptive middle class.

That this poetry is more "free" than the poetry of the Twentieth Century is only a reflection of a generally freer attitude towards matters sexual by that society. But Restoration society was not without its sexual standards, no matter how different they were from those of the present day, and to infer otherwise would be to grossly misunderstand that earlier society.

Even within the poetry, there is solid evidence that the Restoration was not completely devoid of sexual standards. All of the publishers treated some

words elliptically, although no two seemed to agree just which words needed dashes or first letters only. Some thought "c---" the proper form of "cunt"; others printed the word in full. Some omitted a word entirely, especially when it figured in the rhyme-scheme and could be easily inserted by the reader. "Prick" was generally filled in with dashes —not always—but "tarse" apparently was acceptable English to most for the male sex organ. "Frig" was fine; "fuck" was not. "Shit" carried no social opprobrium, and that word, both as a noun and verb, apparently was used in polite conversation. Similarly, "fart" and "piss" were acceptable—although when Sir Charles Sedley accomplished the latter standing nude on a balcony of a tavern overlooking a crowded street, he ran afoul of the crowd's outraged sense of decorum.

The sexual life of the era must be taken on its own terms, and not viewed against the backdrop of what our own period would consider to be moral or immoral. Until now, most scholars have refused to do this; consequently, the poetic reflections of this freer sexual life have been quietly censored.

The poetry itself is sometimes humorous, sometimes clever, sometimes gallant, sometimes rowdy. Much of it is self-conscious and artificial. The Damons and Phyllises and Chloes and Stephrons of the Greek and Latin classics appear constantly as projections of the poet and his lover. The poetic conceits—elaborate euphemisms entwined one upon the other—pile up. In time, the poetry is frozen into stereotypes; the poems of love lost sink to a numbing mediocrity. The poems in praise of this or that woman use the same cliches employed in earlier poetry in praise of other women.

The best of the poetry is short and direct, the comparisons neatly turned. Culled from *The Aca-*

demy of Compliments (London, 1640), these short poems were theoretically to be used by courtiers wooing young ladies:

On Her Breasts

Her breasts, those ivory globes circled with blue,
Save of their Lord, no bearing yoke they knew.

On Her Paps

Her paps are like fair apples in their prime,
And from those sweets, love sucks his summer-time.

On Her Navel

Here love delights the wandering thought,
Whilst that mine eyes astray are brought.
Since nature here would fain unite
In curious circles busy fight.

On Her Belly

Most beauteous seal of virgin wax,
Pity this still the impression lacks.
This place my sense with joy doth fill
Since 'tis entitled "Cupid's Hill":
From hence a seemly passage there doth flow
To stranger pleasures that are plac'd below.

On Her Womb

Her maiden womb the dwelling house of pleasure.
O blest is he may search that secret treasure.

These compliments, embroidered into poetry which would turn the heart of the most disdainful woman, become even more insistent. Should the woman prove virtuous, the gallant might try these poetic warnings on virginity:

Jewels being lost, we find again; this never.
'Tis lost but once, and once lost, lost forever.

Like untun'd golden strings fair women are,
Which lying long untouched will harshly jar.

Perhaps half of the poetry centers on these poetic devices; the other half is much more direct. This excerpt from "The Epistle from L—Y W—Y, to a Female Friend, Single, Descriptive of the Nuptial Joys" (published in *The Festival of Love,* 1789, but probably 75 years older) is a fair example of the straight-forward poetry of the period:

. . . The wedding dinner and the supper past,
The chiefest pleasure, Lucy, comes at last;
Disrobed of all my finery of dress,
In virgin smock the snowy sheets I press.
Snowy at present—soon another show
Their white shall stain, and leave a crimson hue!
The maid's withdrawn and far remov'd the light;
The captain enters, well prepar'd for the fight;
The amorous fight, which shall in blood commence
Awhile to wound, yet soon enchant each sense.

Ye virgin muses on Parnassus' hill,
There, with your chastity, continue still.
No aid I ask from you, but Venus, thee,
I ask to lend assistance unto me
While I describe the fierce encounter, where

I lost my maidenhead, and virgin fear;
Thou who warm wishes to young bosoms send
The youth's best guide and tender miss's friend,
Goddess of joy, and never-tiring sport,
Thy aid, bright Venus, only now I court.
Give thy assistance, bid the picture glow
With all the charms thy coloring can bestow.

Trembling, and panting, for the wish'd embrace,
The fiery lover soon assumes his place.
The fount of love awhile he seeks in vain;
I grasp my shift, his fury to restrain.
His fury from restraint more ardent grows
And from the bed the coverlid he throws.
With one rude rent, my lily shift he tore
And open laid what cover'd was before.
Then with his finger first, he gropes about
To find the center of all raptures out;
That once obtain'd, he plunges dreadful in.
At first, indeed, it some resistance found,
But soon was with noble conquest crown'd;
I smarted much, but straight a flood of joy
Did every fear and every harm destroy.
Such home-felt thrust, with vigor so pursued,
With an enchanting frenzy seized my blood;
A clammy dew o'er every limb was spread;
With murm'ring sighs I turn'd aside my head;
Yet to his ardent wishes did bestow
From Nature's fountain a capacious flow.

Believe me, Lucy, such the joys I shar'd
None else, on earth, are possibly compar'd.
No wonder lover in every age has been
The idol! chief adored in every scene,
Whether with shepherds on the rural plain
Or in the courts, where kings and princes reign.
To all it does the greatest joys dispense,
The only certain good of Providence.

The charming youth, from sport could not refrain,
But soon he mounts the throne of joys again.
Again begins to run another course,
With equal charms, and with as equal force;
Plunges all manly his subduing dart,
Sinks me with joys that overflow my heart;
Till kind emission bids him rest once more,
And softer dalliance shall his strength restore.

Locked in each other's arms, awhile we lay
And kiss, and chat about the amorous play;
O'er every part his ready fingers rove;
Now press my rising breasts, and now the fount of love;
Till strong emotions bid those joys renew
(Which soon, dear Lucy, must be known to you
For sure a girl with such a glowing heart
Must in love's sports ere long perform a part).
"All night the dauntless hero kept his way,"
Nor did we slumber till the dawn of day;
Then in sweet dreams, we melted into bliss,
But lo, my officious mother ope's the door,
And awakes to breakfast at the accustom'd hour;
My husband rises, but recumbent I
(For rest was needful) something longer lie.

At length the maids repair to see me drest.
From their sly looks their wanton thoughts I guess'd.
What buzzing hosts of visitors appear,
With "How do you do? I wish you joy, my dear."
I wished their tongues would other themes employ,
For, faith, I could not tell them half my joy.

The captain kindly comes to my relief;
My only wish, of all my joys the chief!
From those impertinents who'd bliss delay,
We tip the wink, and slyly steal away;
To a snug room we haste, make fast the door,
And play the game so lately played before;
There, on a couch, he feasts his roving eyes,
And views each secret charm with great surprise,
Kisses that spot from whence his pleasure flows!
And then a benediction large bestows.
The elastic tube, which gave me so much joy,
Does now the wonder of my eyes employ;
Its ruby crest, bright rising to the fight,
Gave, to behold, most exquisite delight;
I stroked the marble pillar with my hand,
And, as it grew, I found my bliss expand!
Till once again we tried the charming sport,
And the sweet captain storm'd again love's fort . . .

This was, by no means, the most erotic or bawdy of the poetry of the period. A good deal of it, especially the satirical poetry on political subjects, is scabrous, its slander and maliciousness matched only by its political fervor. The first three poems, for example, in *The Rump*, published in 1660, the year the monarchy was restored, deal with fanciful incidents in which supporters of Cromwell bugger available animals. Published openly, and pirated frequently, none of the three are even good poems; their popularity stems only from the fact that they were ardently pro-monarchy.

Charles II—who earned the nickname of "Old Rowley" after his favorite stallion—happily tolerated such poetry as long as it favored his cause. But when the satirists grew critical of his mistresses,

Charles II threatened to close the coffee houses where the satire was incubated. Toleration of the bawdry depended entirely upon whose ox was gored.

Libel and slander laws ill-formed during the period, and obscenity statutes non-existent, the poets were free to attack anyone they wished—as long as that person was not too well connected. Only then would the king act, on his own, without legal authority, relying only on the quasi-legal authority of "might makes right." Consequently, the satirists flailed away with relative impunity. Their venom survives in a number of poems of the period and some anthologized here.

This collection may be divided into three chronological sections although the demarkation between these is not precise. The poetry is a product and reflection of an era which spanned fully a century. The death of Elizabeth I may mark the end of the Tudors and the coming of the Stuarts—a political matter—but there is no such historical fact to end one sociological period and begin another. Cultures change less dramatically than do governments.

In general then, this collection of erotic poetry of the Seventeenth Century—of which the Restoration is the highpoint—may be classified into a beginning period from the end of Elizabeth's reign to the beginning of the Civil War in 1649; a period of full-flowering from the end of the interregnum to the death of Charles II in 1685; and finally, the period of decline.

The Restoration was not so much different in kind than in degree from the Elizabethan period which preceded it. The roots—that is, the more or less open eroticism—the ribaldry, lay there.

Cromwellian England was an over-severe reaction to what the Puritans felt was the licentiousness of post-Elizabethan England. Artistically, England

all but blacked out during the Commonwealth. The Restoration rakes of later years were in exile with their king-to-be; the theatrical stage was shuttered, and public entertainments were severely circumscribed.

The interregnum ended, as America's glorious experiment, Prohibition, was to end 300 years later, with a great sigh of relief. Furthermore, as frequently happens, there was a violent reaction to the enforced decorum of the Puritans. The Restoration picked up where the post-Elizabethan period had left off some twenty years before, and the lid was off. Perhaps at first amused by the sexual antics of the rakes and wits, the public humor turned to a later amazement, then dismay, then anger.

Charles II, with no end of illegitimate offspring, lacked an heir, and was succeeded by his brother, James II. With his ascension, the Restoration went into decline. The poets and playwrights of the prior reign still wrote, but as they died, their ribaldry died with them.

Public reaction, ever fickle to the wondrous sexual excesses of Charles II and the politico-religious conversion of James II to Catholicism, helped to bring an end to the period. James reigned a brief three years before he ran afoul of Parliament and was succeeded by the discreetly homosexual team of William and Mary. The brief Age of Queen Anne (1702-1714), considered a minor high-point in English letters, ended with the coming of the stolid, wet-blanket Hanoverians.

In this period of decline, erotic poetry was still composed, but it found its way into print less frequently, and with more circumspection. The wild good humor of the Restoration wits was gone, replaced by a self-conscious eroticism. The older poets still wrote in the Restoration mold; the newer poets

were more discreet. (Consequently, the editor was obliged to search many more post-Restoration song and poetry collections to find the handful of examples worthy of inclusion here than he had been to find the poems which make up the bulk of the book.)

In part, the dichotomy has been blurred in that the editor has deliberately attempted to choose the *best* examples, in his judgment, of the popular erotic poetry written during the period. This is especially true for the period of decline when poems the equal of those written during the heydey of the Restoration infrequently appeared. In choosing to reprint the best of these rather than a comprehensive sampling of the good *and* bad, the decline is less apparent.

In spite of the tailing off from the high point of the reign of Charles II, the entire Seventeenth Century and the first years of Eighteenth were years of relative sexual freedom, and a healthy delight in things erotic. Later moralists may wish to condemn the poetry which reflects this sexual liberty, but they cannot deny that it accurately mirrors the attitudes of the Restoration's upper class. For this sociological reason—aside from any consideration of their artistic merit—these poems of ribald rakes and lusty ladies should be preserved.

A note on printing practices of the period would be in order. Publishers were anything but careful in hand-setting type, and proof-reading was an indifferent art. Consequently, the books of the period are marred by frequent spelling errors—this on top of the fact that the orthography of the language was anything but settled, and spelling was frequently an idiosyncratic adventure in letters. Indeed, in the same book, and often enough in the same poem, a word such as "leg" might also appear as "legg" and/or "legge."

Throughout this publication, spelling has been standardized as an aid to the modern reader. Similarly, the erratic punctuation of the Restoration—especially the stylistic avoidance of periods in the middle of poetic stanzas—has been modified to conform, more or less, with accepted rules of punctuation of the Twentieth Century.

Finally, the editor wishes to thank the supremely patient librarians of the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Los Angeles, for their unflagging kindness.

A LOVER'S DIRECTIONS

By the time of Elizabeth I, printing had become a flourishing craft, and in the hands of some, a fine art. Presses were numerous, and they turned out a flood of material: poetry, sermons, political tracts and religious pamphlets. Most of the poetry was printed on single slips of paper and hawked individually by ballad sellers in the streets. These broadsides, as they are called, deliberately attempted to be topical, and insofar as they reported in rhyme actual happenings, served as the daily gazette. Sprinkled amongst the journalistic ballads—which rarely hewed closely to historical fact—were hundreds of poetic flights of fancy, the escapist literature of the day.

Come, pretty one, shall I love thee?
Say, little one, shall I prove thee?
Gently moving, be not cruel!
Wish lovingly, oh my jewel!
Talk coyly, move affection!
Toy prettily, cause erection!
Look merrily while I woo thee!
Blush cheerfully whilst I do thee!
Look prettily! Oh, that's meetest!
Do feelingly! Oh, that's sweetest!
Fall willingly, and lie flatly!
Keep close to me whilst thou ar't at me!
Move sprightly, and lie panting!
Show rightly nothing be wanting!
Speak faintly; fairly languish!
Die daintily in sweet anguish!
Swear evermore, I shall woe thee!
And evermore, pluck me to thee!

("Love Poems and Humorous Ones") ca. 1600

NIGHT AND MORNING TOO

This has all the earmarks of a bawdy story of the period set in rhyme.

A wanton wench, being newly wed
Unto the pleasures of a marriage bed,
Asked the physician which he thought most right
For Venus' sports: the morning or the night.
He answered her as he did deem most meet:
"The morn more wholesome, but the night more sweet."
"Nay then," quoth she, "since we have time and leisure,
We'll to 't each morn for health, each night for pleasure."

("Love Poems and Humorous Ones") ca. 1600

EPITAPHS

The art of writing short epigrams and epitaphs has fallen upon evil ways. We prefer to speak only well of the dead in modern times. But here are two Restoration inscriptions for headstones which treat the deceased with as much ribald frankness in death as they probably received in life.

Here lies entomb'd—the Lord have mercy on her!—
One of the queen's maids of honor.
She was both fair and wise, and witty;
She died a maid: the more's the pity.

Here lies fair Penelope, or my Lady Rich,
Or the Countesse of Devonshire. I know not
which.
One stone contains her now—this Death can do—
Who in her life was not content with two.

("Love Poems and Humorous Ones") ca. 1600

WHEN PHOEBUS ADDRESSED

This song was written about 1600 and seventy years later was still being reprinted in collections of popular songs of the day. The reason for its popularity is easy to see.

When Phoebus addressed himself to the west
And set up his rest below,
Cynthia agreed, in her glittering weed,
Her beauty on me to bestow;
And walking alone, attended by none,
By chance I heard one cry,
"O do not, do not kill me yet,
For I am not prepared to die!"

With that I drew near to see and to hear
And strange did appear such a show;
The moon was so bright that I saw such a sight
As fits not each one for to know.
A man and a maid together were laid,
And ever the maid she did cry,
"Oh do not, do not kill me yet,
For I am not prepared to die!"

The youth was so rough; he took up her stuff
And to blind-man's bluff they did go.
Though she cried, "Fie!," yet still she did lie
And put him but by with "No":
For she was so young, and he was so strong,
She rested not long to cry,
"O do not, do not kill me yet
For I am not prepared to die!"

Thus striving in vain, well pleased with pain,
She vowed to remain his foe,
For he kept such a coil when he gave her the foil,
That greater the broil did grow.
He was so prepar'd, he did not regard
Her words when he heard her cry,
"O do not, do not kill me yet,
For I am not prepared to die!"

He said to this maid, "Be not afraid.
Thy physician I will be.
*An' I'll find but the place; I'll handle the case**
And give thee thy physic free."
He went to t again, and found out the vein
Whereat her pain did lie.
"O kill me, kill me," then she said,
"For now I am prepared to die."

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*There is hidden meaning here; "case" was a euphemism for the vagina.

With that he gave o're and solemnly swore
He would kill her no more that night.
Full little he knew when he had her [in] view,
She would tempt him to new delight,
But when they should part, it went to her heart,
And taught her more art to cry,
"O kill me, kill me once again,
For now I am prepared to die."

("Love Poems and Humorous Ones") ca. 1600; erratum corrected from the version of the *Percy Folio Manuscripts*, ca. 1620.

WALKING IN A MEADOW GREEN

Inevitably, as the broadsides spewed from the presses, there would be those industrious sorts who felt compulsively driven to collect all they could find. The champion single collector was the gossipy diarist, Samuel Pepys, whose collection ran to 1671 different items. Sheer bulk alone means little enough, and ballad scholars tend to believe that the collection of 191 hand-copied ballads rescued by the Bishop Percy from chambermaids who were using the leaves to kindle fires is the finest. That at least three different gentlefolk laboriously copied the so-called "loose and humorous songs" included in the Percy Folio Manuscript says much for the times.

Walking in a meadow green,
Fair flowers for to gather,
Where primrose ranks did stand on banks
To welcome comers thither,
I heard a voice which made a noise
Which caused me to attend it.
I heard a lass say to a lad,
"Once more and none can mend it."

They lay so close together
They made me much to wonder.
I knew not which was whether
Until I saw her under.
Then off he came, and blushed for shame
So soon that he had ended.
Yet still she lies, and to him cries,
"Once more, and none can mend it."

His looks were dull and very sad.
His courage she had tamed.
She bade him play the lusty lad
Or else he quite was shamed.
"Then stiffly thrust, he hit me just;
Fear not, but freely spent it,
And play about at in-and-out.
Once more, and none can mend it."

And then her thought to venter her,
Thinking the fit was on him,
But when he came to enter her,
The point turn'd back upon him.
Yet she said, "Stay! Go not away
Although the point be bended!
But to 't again, and hit the vein!
Once more, and none can mend it."

Then in her arms she did him fold,
And oftentimes she kissed him,
Yet still his courage was but cold
For all the good she wished him.
Yet with her hand she made it stand
So stiff she could not bend it,
And then anon she cries, "Come on.
Once more, and none can mend it."

"Adieu, adieu, sweetheart," quoth he,
"For, in faith, I must be gone."
"Nay, then you do me wrong," quoth she,
"To leave me thus alone."
Away he went when all was spent,
Whereat she was offended;
Like a Trojan true, she made a vow:
She would have one should rend it.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

AS I WAS RIDING BY THE WAY

The misfortunes of would-be lovers are many. "Drab" in the last stanza is an unfavorable term for a woman, justly called for in view of her sharp tongue.

As I was riding by the way,
A woman offered me a bag
And forty cattle more to stay
And give her belly but a swag.

A pox on the whore! they were but scraps
That I supposed was single money.
The cattle had lice, or else perhaps
I'd alighted and taken her by the cunny.

I had not further ridden a mile
But I met with a market maid,
Who sang, the way for to beguile,
In these same words and thus she said:

"I see the bull doth bull the cow;
And shall I live a maiden still?
I see the boar doth brim the sow,
And yet there is never Jack for Jill."

I had some hope, and to her spoke,
"Sweetheart, shall I put my flesh in thine?"
"With all my heart, sir! Your nose in my arse,"
Quoth she, "For to keep out the wind."

She rode upon a tired mare,
And to revenge no time withstood,
I bluntly asked to occupy her,
But first she would know wherefore that was good.

"It will make thee lively," I did say,
"Put joy and spirit instead of woe."
"Then occupy my mare, I pray,
Good sir, for she can hardly go."

I milder grew, and would but feel.
She said she was never felt, but kissed;
I was content, and she said, "Well,
You kiss my bum and feel my fist."

I was red and pale with shame and spite
To be so answered of the drab
That I swore and spurred, and away did ride,
And of my wooing would not blab.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

THE MAN THAT HATH

Not infrequently, the erotic poetry of the Seventeenth Century reflects a deep understanding of subtle psychological factors in the way of a man with a maid. In this case, it is a recognition of the special pleasure of forbidden joys. "Reason" in the older usage means "right."

The man that hath a handsome wife
And keeps her as a treasure:
It is my chiefest joy of life
To have her at my pleasure.

But if that man regardless were,
As though he cared not for her—
Though she were like to Venus fair—
In faith, I would abhor her.

If to do good I were restrained,
And to do evil bidden,
I would be Puritan, I swear,
For I love the thing forbidden.

It is the care that makes the theft;
None loves the thing forsaken.
The bold and willing whore is left
When the modest wench is taken.

She's dull who is too forward bent.
Not good, but want, is reason.
Fish at a feast, and flesh in Lent
Are never out of season.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

DULCINA

Back to the woods and groves of the idealized pastoral settings favored by the poets of the period. The tune for this very secular ballad was borrowed, incidentally, as the setting for a pious hymn.

As, at noon, Dulcina rested
In her sweet and shady bower,
There came a shepherd who requested
In her lap to sleep an hour.
But from her look a wound he took
So deep, that for a further boon
The nymph he prays; whereto she says
"Forgo me now; come to me soon."

But in vain she did conjure him
To depart her presence so.
Having thousand tongues to allure him,
And but one to say him no.
Where lips invite, and eyes delight,
And cheeks as red as rose in June
Persuade delay, what but she say
"Forgo me now; come to me soon"?

Words whose hopes might have enjoined
Him to let Dulcina sleep.
Can a man's love be confined,
Or a maid her promise keep?
But he her waist still held as fast
As she was constant to her tune,
Though ne'er so fair, her speeches were
"Forgo me now; come to me soon."

He demands, "What time for pleasure
Can there be more fit than now?"
She says, "Night gives love their leisure
That the day cannot allow."
"The same kind sight forgives delight,"
Quoth he, "More easily than the moon."
"In Venus' plays be bold," she says,
"Forgo me now; come to me soon."

But who knows how agreed these lovers?
She was fair, and he was young.
Tongues may tell what eyes discover;
Joys unseen are never sung.
Did she consent or he relent?
Accepts he night, or grants she noon?
Left he her [a] maid or not? She said,
"Forgo me now; come to me soon."

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1615

DO YOU MEAN

The maiden's eternal dilemma rhymed. The pleasures of a moment must be weighed against the threat of scandal.

Do you mean to overthrow me?
Out! alas! I am betrayed!
What! is this the love you show me?
To undo a silly maid?
Alas! I die! my heart doth break!
I dare not cry; I cannot speak!
What! all alone? Nay, then I find
Men are too strong for womankind.

Out with the woman that put me
In this room to be alone!
Yet she was no fool to shut me
Where I would be seen by none.
Hark! Hark! Alack! What noise is that?
Oh, now I see it is the cat.
Come gentle puss; thou wilt not tell.
If all do so, thou shalt not tell.

Silly fool! why doubts thou telling
Where thou didst not doubt to trust?
If thy belly fall a-swelling,
There's no hope, but out it must.
Alas, the spite! Alas, the shame!
For then I quite lose my good name;
But yet the worst of a maid's disgrace,
I am not the first nor shall be the last.

Once again to try your forces,
Thus I dare thee to the field.
Time is lost that time divorces
From the pleasures love doth yield.
A ha! fie, fie! it comes yet still!
It comes, ei, ei! Do what you will!
My breath doth pass; my blood doth trickle!
Was ever lass in such a pickle?

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

A MAID AND A YOUNG MAN

There is humor in love, the humor of nature's pranks on mankind. The man willing; the maiden is not. The maiden willing; the man is not. Literally, such is life.

A man and a young maid that loved a long time
Were ta'en in a frenzy in Midsummer prime.
The maid she lay drooping, hye.
The man he lay whooping, hey,
The man he lay whooping, hoe.

Thus talking and walking they came to a place
Environed about with trees and with grass.
The maid she lay drooping, hye.
The man he lay whooping, hey,
The man he lay whooping, hoe.

He shifted his hand whereat he had placed.
He handled her knees instead of her waist.
The maid she lay drooping, hye.
The man he lay whooping, hey,
The man he lay whooping, hoe.

He shifted his hand till he came to her knees.
He tickled her and she opened her thighs.
Yet still she lay drooping, hye.
The man he lay whooping, hey,
The man he lay whooping, hoe.

He hottered and tottered, and there was a lane
That drew him on forward; he went on amain.
Yet still she lay drooping, hye.
The man he lay whooping, hey,
The man he lay whooping, hoe.

He light in a hole ere he was aware.
The lane it was straight; he had not gone far.
But she fell a-kissing, hye.
And he lay drooping, hey,
And he lay drooping, hoe.

"My Billy, my pilly! How now?" quoth she.
"Get up again, Billy, if thou lovest me."
The maid she lay whooping, hye,
Yet still he lay drooping, hey.
The maid she lay whooping, hoe.

He thought it great shame to lie so long;
He got up again and grew very strong.
The maid she lay drooping, hye.
The man he lay whooping, hey.
The man he lay whooping, hoe.

The trees and the woods did ring about,
And every leaf began to shout,
And there was such drooping, hye,
There was such whooping, hey.
There was such whooping, hoe.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

LIE ALONE

From the Seventeenth Century on, in both art and folk poetry, there are numerous complaints of young maids who find their maidenheads intolerable burdens. They usually find a man willing to relieve them of it.

Can anyone tell what maidens ail?
I am grown so weak, so wan, so pale.
If I may judge, I'd think I'm grown
And can no longer lie alone.

Was ever maiden's case like mine?
At fifteen years, I began to pine;
So unto this plight now I am grown
And can no longer lie alone.

When day is come, I wish for night;
When night is come, I wish for light.
Thus all my time I sigh and moan
And can no longer lie alone.

If dreams be true, then ride I can;
I lack nothing but a man,
For 'tis only he can ease my moan.
I can no longer lie alone.

To woo him first, ashamed am I;
But if he ask, I will not deny.
Such is my case, I must have one.
I can no longer lie alone.

Therefore my prayer, it shall be still
That I may have one to work my will,
For only he can ease me anon.
I will no longer lie alone.

Anonymous broadside, ca. 1600; erratum from ***Percy Folio Manuscript***, ca. 1620

COME WANTON WENCHES

Frank advice from the old harlot to the would-be mistress of a town rake on the way to keep her lover in tow.

Come all you wanton wenches
That long to be in trading.
Come learn from me, Love's mistress,
To keep yourselves from fading.
When you expose your faces,
All baits for to entrap men,
Then have a care to husband your ware,
That you prove not bankrupt chapmen.
Be not at first too nice or coy
When gamesters you are courting,
Nor forward to be sporting.
In speeches free, not in action be,
For fear of less resorting.

Let not your outward gesture
Betray your inward passion;
But seem to neglect, when most you do affect
In a cunning, scornful fashion.
Be sparing of your favors
When men's love grows most eager,
Yet keep good guard, or else all is marred,
When they your fort beleaguer.
Grant but a touch or a kiss for a taste,
And seem not to be willing
Always for to be billing.
With a touch, or a pinch, or a nip, or a wrench
Disappoint their hope's fulfilling

If once you grow too lavish,
And all your wealth [un]cover,
You cast off hope, for then with too much scope
You do dull your eager lover.
Then order so your treasure,
And so dispend your store,
That though men do taste, their loves may never waste,
But they still may hope for more.
And if by chance, being wrapt in a trance,
You yield them full fruition
(Won by strong opposition),
Yet nip and tear, and with pouting swear,
'Twas against your disposition.

Thus seeming much displeased
With that which did most content,
You whet desire, and daily add fire
To a spirit almost spent.
Be sure at the next encounter,
You put your love to strive.
Yet be not rude, if need he will intrude.
So shall your trading thrive.
So shall you still be freshly wooed
Like to a perfect maid.
Your feigning seems true, and like Venus ever-new
And your trading is not betrayed.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

AS IT BEFELL ON A SUMMER'S DAY

Two young ladies set out from London in search of codlings, little cod-fish, and either by design or accident—the poet is slyly vague—end up with a bellyful of codlings, or testicles. Thus intent on one of the Seven Deadly Sins, they end up committing another.

As it befell on a Summer's day,
When Phoebus in his glory
Was suited in his best array—
As here records my story—
Two London damsels forth they would ride.
They were decked in their pomp and their pride.
They said they would go far and wide,
But they would go gather codlings.

Sisters they were, exceedingly fine,
And matchless in their beauty.
Happy was the wight who could give them wine
To express his love and duty.
So fine, so feat, so sweet, so neat, so delicate!
O, it would do you good for to hear them prate!
But yet in truth they have a fault:
To fill their belly full of codlings.

Then to an orchard straight they went,
Intending for to enter.
The younger with a bold attempt
First did intend to enter.
"Nay, softly!" quoth the elder wench,
"I pray thee let us go from hence;
For here I am in some suspense
That here I shall get no codlings."

"Art thou so fond? Canst thou not see
What good luck doth abode us?
Yonder lies a young man under a tree
That with his fruit can load us.
Then to the orchard straight we will stray;
We'll devise with him to sport and to play,
And then I'll warrant you without delay
He'll fill our belly full of codlings."

Then she did leap over the ditch
As light as any feather;
Her sister after her did leap
[Now fearing none whatever].
With a merry heart and a joyful cheer,
Setting aside all care and fear,
Seeing her sister 'scape so clear.
She would not lose her share o' codlings.

Then she did leap over the ditch
As light as any arrow;
And in her leap, "Ah! ah!" she cries,
Feeling her smock was narrow
As maidens do that newly-wed
Being taken from her true lover's bed.
And with a sigh her maidenhead
Was worn away with eating codlings.

Her sister, on the other side
Where she attended,
Bid her have a care: her smock was too wide.
With that she was offended.
When a nettle stung her by the knee,
"A pox on all straight smocks," quoth she.
Seeing it would no better be,
She laid down to gather codlings.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

A FRIEND OF MINE

Children still recite teasing rhymes such as this in which they rush headlong into profanity, then pull up short just before they go over the brink. One of the most common of these teasing rhymes amongst children nowadays runs:

I took my gal to a baseball game.
We sat right down front.
The batter hit a fly ball
That landed in her

Country boy, country boy
Sitting on a rock.
Along came a bumble bee
And stung him on the

Cocktail, ginger ale,
Five cents a glass.
If you don't like it,
You can shove it up your

Ask me no questions;
I'll tell you no lies.
A guy got hit with a bucket of shit
Right between the eyes.

Apparently the early Stuart poet who fashioned "A Friend of Mine" took an older folk song and tacked on three introductory stanzas, the first two of which are superfluous. (They have been dropped here.) The word which the Seventeeth Century reader anticipated has been placed in parenthesis at the end of each stanza as an aid to the Twentieth Century reader.

It was my chance, not long ago,
By a pleasant wood to walk,
Where I unseen of any one
Did hear two lovers talk.
And as these lovers forth did pass
Hard by a pleasant shade,
Hard by a mighty pine tree there,
Their resting place they made.

"In sooth," then did this young man say,
"I think this fragant place
Was only made for lovers true
Each other to embrace."

He took her by the middle small—
Good sooth I do not mock—
Not meaning to do any thing
But to pull up her (smock)

Block whereon she sat, poor silly soul,
To rest her weary bones.
This maid she was no whit afraid,
But she caught him fast by the (stones)

Thumbs, whereat he vexed and grieved was,
So that his flesh did wrinkle.
This maid she was no whit afraid,
But caught him fast hold by the (pintle)

Pimple which he had on his chin likewise.
(But let the pimple pass.)
There is no man here but he may suppose
She were a merry lass.

He boldly ventured, being tall,
Yet in his speech but blunt
He never ceased, but took up all
And catch 'd her by the (cunt)

Plump and red rose lips he kissed full sweet.
Quoth she, "I crave no succor."
Which made him to have a mighty mind
To clip, kiss, and to (fuck her)

Pluck her into his arms. "Nay, soft," quoth she,
"What needeth all this doing?
For if you will be ruled by me,
You shall use small time in wooing.

"For I will lay me down," quoth she,
*"Upon the slippery seggs,**
And all my clothes I'll truss up round,
And spread abroad my (legs)

Eggs which I have in my apron here
Under my girdle tucked;
So shall I be most fine and brave,
Most ready to be (fucked)

"Ducked unto some pleasant springing well,
For now it's time of the year
To deck, and bathe, and trim ourselves,
Both head, hands, feet, and gear.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

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*Any seat or stool, but probably used most often as a reference to the furnishings of an outhouse.

A MAIDENHEAD

Argument upon entreaty to weaken the maid's firm resolve. "Philip sparrow" is the common sparrow. The "damasyn" is the damson plum, which like the apricot withers if it is left unplucked.

Come, sit thee down by these cool streams
Never yet warmed by Titan's beams.
My tender youth thy waist shall clip,
And fix upon thy cherry lip;
And lay thee down on this green bed,
Where thou shalt lose thy maidenhead.

See how the little philip sparrow,
Whose joints do overflow with marrow,
On yonder bough how he doth prove
With his mate the joys of love,
And doth instruct thee, as he doth tread,
How thou shalt lose thy maidenhead.

O you youngling, be not nice!
Coyness in maids is such a vice.
If in youth you do not marry,
In age young men will let you tarry.
By my persuasion then be led
And lose in time thy maidenhead.

Clothes that embroider'd be with gold,
If never worn, will quickly mold.
If in time you do not pluck
The damasyn or the apricocke,
In pinching Autumn they'll be dead.
Then lose in time thy maidenhead.

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

THE SEA CRAB

In tale and song, the story of "The Sea Crab" is known throughout Europe and the United States. Four hundred years after it was first set down in print, the bawdy song is still sung throughout the English-speaking world.

It was a man of Africa [*who*] *had a fair wife,*
Fairest that ever I saw the days of my life.
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

This goodwife was big-bellied, and with a lad,
And ever she longed for a [*great*] *sea crab.*
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

The goodman rose in the morning and put on his hose.
He went to the seaside, and followed his nose.
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

Says, "God speed, fisherman, sailing on the sea.
Hast thou any crabs in thy boat for to sell [*to*] *me?"*
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

"I have crabs in my boat, one, two, or three.
I have crabs in my boat for to sell [to] thee."
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

The goodman went home, and ere he wist
And put the crab in the chamber pot where his wife pissed.
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

The goodwife, she went to do as she was wont;
Up start the crabfish, and catch'd her by the cunt.
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

"Alas!" quoth the goodwife, "that ever I was born.
The devil is in the piss pot, and has me on his horn."
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

The goodman laid to his mouth, and began to blow,
Thinking thereby that the crab would let go.
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

"If thou be a crab or crabfish by kind,
Thou'll let thy hold go with a blast of cold wind."
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

The goodman called his neighbors in with great wonder,
To part his wife's tail and his nose assunder.
With a ging, boys, ging!
Ging, boys, ging!
Tarradiddle, faradiddle,
Ging, boys, ging!

Percy Folio Manuscript, ca. 1620

A MAN'S YARD

Riddles which suggest the obscene or the erotic but which have wondrously innocent solutions are common in folklore. In the early Seventeenth Century, this one was first set down:

Thus my riddle doth begin:
A maid would have a thing put in,
And with her hand she brought it to 't;
It was so meek, it would not do 't.

And at the length she used it so,
That to the hole she made it go.
When it had done as she could wish,
"Ah ha!" quoth she, "I'm glad of this!"

(A maid went to thread a needle.)

"A Man's Yard" makes no such pretense at *double entendre.*

Read me a riddle: what is this?
You hold in your hand when you piss?
It is a kind of pleasing sting,
A pricking and a pleasing thing.

It is a stiff, short, fleshy pole
That fits to stop a maiden's hole.
It is Venus' wanton, staying wand
That ne'er had feet, and yet can stand.

It is a pen with a hole in the top
To write in between her two-leaved book.
It is a thing both dumb and blind,
Yet narrow holes in dark can find.

It is a dwarf in height and length,
And yet a giant in its strength.
There is never a lady in this land
Who will not take it in her hand.

The fairest maid that e'er took life
For love of this became a wife,
And every wench, by her own will,
Would keep it in her quiver still.

Rawlinson Manuscript (British Museum), c. 1600

BLACK THING

Women as much as men enjoy the pleasures of love, a pre-Kinsey finding which animates much of Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Century poetry.

Ye nymphs and ye swains that trip over the plains,
Come listen a while to my innocent tale,
And hear me with pity while I do sing,
It's no less than the loss of my little black thing.

As I sat at cards with a friend t'other day,
To pass some dull hours and drive care away,
Young Colin as brisk as a bird in the Spring
He wanted to play with my little black thing.

On me his sly looks were constantly bent.
To gaze on my beauty, it was his intent.
His looks towards me he did frequently fling
While he gently handled my little black thing.

I dreamt of no hurt but thought him quite blunt,
And gave him the pleasure to play with my cunt.
Then he got up his prick quite stiff for a fling
And ran it slap into my little black thing.

Then a thousand soft whispers he forced in my ear.
I bid him begone but [he] still would not hear.
I had no power left from him to spring,
He got so fast hold on my little black thing.

I squeaked and I squealled and bid him let go.
He smiled in my face and answered me, "No."
A crown in my lap he did instantly fling
To let him enjoy my little black thing.

Then a full prick he put in my hand.
It wanted no coaxing to make it to stand.
I measured it round with a nine-inch string,
And found it just fit for my little black thing.

Then I got on the ground and lay on my back.
He drew his prick and banged my cunt in a crack.
My legs 'round his body I fixed as a spring,
And dragged out the brains of my little black thing.

***Firth Collection, Bodelian Manuscript,* ca. 1600**

MY DAYS, MY MONTHS, MY YEARS

An early Stuart poet's frank admission. The third stanza's "my lance in rest" means anything but that; mounted knights of earlier centuries had their lances "in rest" as they were about to attack. The last stanza too is a memory of times past, in that it refers to the practice of therapeutic bleeding to drain off "bad" blood and permit ill humours to escape.

My days, my months, my years
I spend about a moment's gain,
A joy that in the enjoying ends,
A fury quickly slain.

A frail delight, like that wasp's life
Which now both frisks and flies
And in a moment's wanton strife,
It faints, it pants, it dies.

And when I charge, my lance in rest,
I triumph in delight,
And when I have the ring transpierced,
I languish in respite.

Or like one in a lukewarm bath,
Light-wounded in a vein,
Spurts out the spirits of his life
And fainteth without pain.

John Attley, *First Book of Airs,* 1622

AS I WENT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Not much for the subtleties, the Elizabethan poets generally took the low road when they slandered someone. Whoever the lady of the court, Madam P., was, the poet obviously disliked her enough, or was so in awe of her sexual prowess that he had the town's hookers resorting to old women's (tabbies') dildoes for lack of available men. "Scad" was Elizabethan slang for "semen," about the equivalent of the present-day "gizzum."

As I went to Westminster Abbey,
I saw a young wench on her back,
Cramming in a dildo of tabby
Into her cunt till 'twas ready to crack.
"By your leave," said I, "pretty maid,
Methinks your sport is but dry."
"I can get no better," she said, "sir,
And I'll tell you the reason why:

"Madam P. hath a thing at her breech
Sucks up all the scad of the town;
She's a damned lascivious bitch,
And fucks for half a crown.
Now the curse of a cunt without hair,
We poor whores may go hang in despair;
We're undone by the maids of honor."

Then in loyalty as I was bound,
Hearing her speak in this sort,
I fucked her thrice on the ground,
And bid her speak well of the court.

Rawlinson Manuscript, ca. 1610.

AN ENCOMIUM

The embarrassments of one period are not those of another. "Furmity," one of the catalysts mentioned in the poem, is a dish of hulled wheat cooked in milk.

I sing the praises of a fart,
That I may do 't by terms of art;
I will invoke no deity,
But butter'd peas and furmity,
And I think their help sufficient
To fit and furnish my intent;
When Virgil's gnat and Ovid's flea,
And Homer's frog strove for the day,
There is no reason in my mind,
Why a fart should come behind,
Since that we may it parallel
With any thing that doth excel.
Music is but a fart that's sent
From the guts of an instrument.
The scholar farts when he gains
Learning with cracking of his brains,
And when he hath spent much pain and oil
Thomas and others to reconcile,
For to learn the distracting art,
What doth he get by it? Not a fart.
The thunder that does roar so loud
Is but the farting of a cloud,
And it withall the wind do stir up
Rain, then 'tis a farting syrup.
The soldier makes his foes to run
With but the farting of a gun—
That's if he make the bullets whistle;
Else 'tis no better than a fizzle.
Fine boats that by the Thames about
Are but farts several docks let out.

They are but farts the words we say;
Words are but words, and so are they.
As soon as born, they by and by,
Fart-like, only sing and die.
Farts are as good as land, for both
We hold in tail and let 'em both.
Applause is but a fart, the rude
Blast of the whole multitude.
And what is working ale, I pray,
But farting yeast which makes a way
Out at the bunghole by farting noise
When we do hear its sputt'ring voice?
And when new drank, and without hops,
It makes us fart, and seldom stops.
I more of farts could write, I vow,
But for my guts I cannot now,
For now I wonderfully rumble,
And my stomach begins to grumble,
Which makes me think that farts ere long
Will at my nose there find a tongue,
And there sing out their own praises
In thund'ring and in choking phrases,
Where I leave them, and them to you,
And so I bid you all adieu.
What I have said take in good part;
If not, I do not care a fart.

Wit's Recreation, 1641

A MAIDEN'S DENIAL

Then as now the maid resisted the advances of the young rake. "A Maiden's Denial" is remarkable in that it catches the girl's ambivalence, and the shift in her mood from resistence to admonishment to solicitude to reconciliation.

Nay pish! nay phew! nay, faith and will you? Fie!
A gentleman and use me thus! I'll cry!
Nay, God's body, what means this? Nay, fie for
shame,
Nay, faith, away! Nay, fie, you are to blame.
Hark! Somebody comes! Hands off, I pray!
I'll pinch, I'll scratch, I'll spurn, I'll run away.
Nay, faith, you strive in vain; you shall not speed.
You mar my ruff; you hurt by back. I bleed.
Look how the door stands ope'; somebody sees!
Your buttons scratch, in faith, you hurt my knees.
What will we say? Lord! what a coil is here!
You make me sweet; i' faith, here's goodly gear.
Nay, faith, let me entreat you, if you list;
You mar my clothes, you tear my smock, but had
I wished
So much before, I would have put you out.
Is it a proper thing you go about?
I did not think you would have used me this,
But now I see I took my aim amiss.
A little thing would make me not be friends,
You've used me well! I hope you'll make amends.
Hold still, I'll wipe your face; you sweat amain;
You have got a goodly thing with all your pain.
Alas! How hot am I! What will you drink?
If you go sweating down, what will men think?
Remember, sir, how you have used me now;
Doubtless ere long I will be meet with you.
If any man but you had used me so,
Would I have put it up? in faith, sir, no.
Nay, go not yet; stay here and sup with me,
And then at cards we better shall agree.

Sportive Wit, The Muse's Merriment, 1655

A COUNTRY SUITOR TO HIS LOVE

The courtly gallants adopted elaborate affectations to prove their love for this or that woman. Inevitably, there were those who couldn't quite master the simpering lisp or the ability to spin off a few choice poems; they had their spokesmen in the earthy country suitor of this poem. To "run upon a high-stretched minikin" means to play a well tuned lute —unless you read "minikin" in its other meaning: young girl. "Running" upon a high-stretched young girl may be left to the reader's imagination.

Fair wench, I cannot court thy sprightly eyes
With a bass viol plac'd betwixt my thighs.
I cannot lisp, nor to a fiddle sing,
Nor run upon a high-stretched minikin.
I am not fashioned for these amorous times
To court this beauty with harmonious rhymes.
I cannot whine in pining elegies,
Entombing Cupid with sad obsequies.
I cannot dally, caper, dance, nor sing,
Gilding my saint with subtle sonneting.
I cannot buss thy fist, play with thy hair,
Swearing, "By Jove, thou are most debonaire."
Not I, by Jove, but shall I tell these roundly?
Hark in thine ear: I can jerk thee soundly.

Wit's Interpreter, 1655

THE MAID OF TOTTENHAM

Although no tune was indicated, the "Derry Down" chorus is a dead give-away that this was a song, and probably was first performed in a theatrical presentation.

As I went to Tot'n'am
Upon a market day,
There I met a fair maid
Clothed all in gray.
Her journey was to London
With buttermilk and whey
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina.

"God speed, fair maid," quoth one,
"You are well over-took."
With that she cast her head aside
And gave to him a look.
(She was as full of lechery
As letters in a book.)
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina.

And as they walked together,
Even side by side,
The young man was aware
That her garter was untied.
For fear that she should lose it,
"A ha, alack," he cried,
"Oh, your garter, that hangs down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina."

Quoth she, "I do entreat you
For to take the pain
To do so much for me
As to tie it up again."
"That will I do, sweetheart," quoth he,
"When I come on yonder plain.
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina."

And when they came upon the plain,
Upon a pleasant green,
The fair maid spread her limbs abroad,
The young man fell between.
Such tying of a garter
I think was never seen!
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina.

When they had done their business
And quickly done the deed,
He gave her kisses plenty
And took her up with speed.
But what they did I know not,
But they were both agreed
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina.

She made to him low curtsies
And thanked him for his pain.
The young man is to Highgate gone.
The maid to London came.
To sell off her commodity,
She thought it for no shame
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina.

When she had done her market
And all her money told,
To think upon the matter,
It made her heart full cold,
"But that which will away," quoth she,
"Is very hard to hold
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina."

This tying of the garter
Cost her her maidenhead.
Quoth she, "It is no matter.
It stood me in small stead.
But ofttimes it troubled me
As I lay in my bed,
To fall down, down, derry down,
Down, down, derry down,
Derry, derry, dina."

Choyce Drollery, 1656

THE BRIDAL NIGHT

Another on the entreaties of the bridegroom to his virgin wife. The "Hymeneal twine" is the marriage ceremony.

Why are thou coy, my Leda? Art thou not mine?
Hath not the holy Hymeneal twine
Power to contract our natures? Must I be
Still interposed with needless modesty?
What though my former passions made me vow
You were an angel, be a mortal now.

The bridesmaids all are vanished, and the crew
O' virgin ladies that did wait on you
Has left us to ourselves as, coy to be,
Not injurious to our love's wish'd privacy.
Come then, undress; why blush you? Prithee smile.
Faith, I'll disrobe you; nay, I will not spoil
Your necklace, or your gorget. Here's a pin
Pricks you. Fair Leda, 'twere a cruel sin
Not to remove it. Oh, how many gates
Are to Elysium? Yet the sweetest straits
That are make voyage happy. Here's a lace
Methinks should stifle you; it doth embrace
Your body too severely. Take a knife;
'Tis tedious to undo it. By my life,
It shall be cut! Let your carnation gown
Be pulled off too, and next let me pull down
This rosy petticoat. What is this cloud
That keeps the daylight from us, and 's allow'd
More privilege than I? Though it be white,
'Tis not the white I aim at—by this light.
It shall go off too. No? Then let 't alone.
Come, let's to bed. Why look you so? There's none
Sees you but I. Be quick, or by this hand
I'll lay you down myself. You make me stand
Too long i' the cold. Why do you lie so far?
I'll follow you; this distance shall not bar
Your body from me. Oh, 'tis well! and now
I'll let thy virgin's innocence know how
Kings propagate young princes. Marriage beds
Never destroy but erect maidenheads.

Sportive Wit, New Springs of Lusty Drollery, 1656

SONG OF DALLIANCE

In the original anthology in which this was published, the song is attributed to one "Cartwright," probably William (1611-1643), a university student who took holy orders after a short career as a roisterer. "Love" in actuality is "Cupid," the son of Venus Aphrodite, the goddess of matters amorous. Myrtle is the plant sacred to her, and the "turtles" are "turtle doves," traditional symbols of love-crossed couples.

Hark, my Flora; Love doth call us
To that strife that must befall us.
He has robb'd his mother's myrtles
And hath pull'd her downy turtles.
See, our genial posts are crown'd
And our beds like billows rise.
Softer combat's nowhere found
And who loses wins the prize.

Let not dark nor shadows fright thee;
Thy limbs of luster, they will light thee.
Fear not any can surprise us;
Love himself doth now disguise us.
From thy waist thy girdle throw.
Night and darkness both dwell here.
Words or actions, who can know
Where there's neither eye nor ear?

Show thy bosom and then hide it;
License touching and then chide it.
Give a grant, and then forbear it;
Offer something, and forswear it.
Ask where all our shame is gone.
Call us wicked, wanton men.
Do as turtles: kiss and groan.
Say "We ne'er shall meet again."

I can hear thee curse, yet chase thee,
Drink thy tears, yet still embrace thee.
Easy riches are no treasure;
She that's willing spoils the pleasure.
Love bids learn the restless fight.
Pull and struggle whilst ye twine,
Let me use my force tonight.
The next conquest shall be thine.

Sportive Wit, New Spring of Lusty Drollery, 1656

A MAIDEN'S COMPLAINT

Just as men beg the young lady's affection, so do the maids regret their yielding hearts.

Shall I weep, or shall I sing?
I know not best what fits mourning.
If I weep, I ease my brain.
If I sing, I sing in pain.
Weeping I'll sing, and singing weep,
To see that men no faith can keep.

Men have all deceitful hearts
To rob poor virgins of their hearts,
And when they love, like tyrants grow,
Triumphing in their overthrow.
Therefore I'll sing, and singing weep,
To see that men no faith can keep.

The treasure's stolen, the thieves are fled,
And we left wounded in our bed;
Then to complain if we begin,
They swear 'twas we that let them in.
Therefore I'll sing, and singing weep,
To see that men no faith can keep.

Wit's Interpreter, 1656

FROM A GENTLEMAN TO HIS MISTRESS

The unashamed sensuousness of the "gentleman" is a refreshing contrast to the simpering flights of poetic fancy generally anthologized in those collections of "the world's best love poems."

Temptation breeds those love-attracting flowers
That grow upon thy crimson cheeks, love's bowers.
Who is there whom thou temptest not with those soft
Red coral lips that I have kist so oft?
Or with those teeth of pearl that double gird
Thy speech (There heavenly music still is heard)?
And from thy sweet lips a kiss being taken
Would tyrants melt, and cruel death awaken.
O, how much those fair, rising breasts do move.
How they invite and tempt me, sweet, to love.
Of polished ivory is thy globe-like belly
Which is as sweet, as soft as any lily,
And under that same snowy, swelling mountain,
Covered with moss, doth stand a milky fountain.
For all these sweets, I love thee. Thy soft thighs
Whose alabaster pillars do arise
Like sea-marks guiding to some happy lands—
O happy are those eyes which have ever seen them.
Most happy he is that shall fall between them.
Between them also for one night to lie—
Nay, one-half hour—I would gladly die.

Wit's Interpreter, 1656

A HISTORICAL BALLAD

Written about 1680 but apparently first published 155 years later in a private collection, this is an attack on Lady Southesk, then mistress of the Duke of York, brother of Charles II, and later to be James II. The stanza beginning: "For that she has bubo'd" (given syphilis to) refers to three of the more famous whores (punks) of the Restoration, a period of fabulous bawdry and legendary whoredom. The comparison of M'Lady Southesk to such famous bawds is a measure of the poet's awe at her sexual prowess and/or his vast dislike. The snide reference to Mr. Foppling as a "chitt" suggests that m'lady's first husband was a homosexual, a sad match for a woman so vigorously endowed.

Much has been said of strumpets of yore,
Of Lais whole volumes, of Messaline more,
But I sing of a lewder than e'er lived before,
Which nobody can deny.

From her mother at first she drew the infection,
And as soon as she spoke, she made use of injection,
And now she's grown up to a girl of perfection,
Which nobody can deny.

If you told her of hell, she would say 'twas a jest,
And swear by all gods that Priapus was best,
For her soul was a whore's when she sucked at
the breast,
Which her nurses can't deny.

She once was called virgin, but 'twas but a sham.
Her maidenhead never was gotten by man.
She frigged it away in the womb of her dam',
Which the midwife couldn't deny.

At length Mr. Foppling made her his bride,
But found (to bring down his ambition and pride)
Her fortune but narrow, and her cunt very wide,
Which he himself can't deny.

In vain he long strove to satiate her lust,
Which still grew more vig'rous at every thrust.
No wonder the puny chitt came by the worst,
Which nobody can deny.

For when he grew sapless, she gave him her blessing,
And left him to painting, to patching, and dressing,
But first dubbed him cuckold, a strange way of jesting,
Which nobody can deny.

And now she is free to swive where she pleases,
And where e'er she swives, she scatters diseases,
And a shanker's a damned loving thing where it seizes,
Which nobody can deny.

There's Haughton and Elland, and Arran the sot
(She deserves to be pox'd that would fuck with a Scot),
All charged the lewd harlot, and all went to pot,
Which they themselves can't deny.

For that she has bubo'd and ruined as many
As Hinton, or Willis, Moll Howard, or any,
And, like to those punks, will fuck for a penny,
Is what nobody can deny.

To scower the town is her darling delight,
In breaking of windows, to scratch, and to fight,
And to lie with her own brawny footman at night,
Which she herself can't deny.

Who, though they eternally pizzle her britch,
Can't allay the wild rage of her lecherous itch,
Which proves our good lady a monstrous bitch,
Which they themselves can't deny.

But now, if there's any, Christian or Jew,
That say I've belied her, I advise them to
Go and ask the fair creature herself if 'tis true,
Which I'm certain she won't deny.

Ane Pleasant Garland of Sweet Scented Flowers, 1835

SHE LAY ALL NAKED IN HER BED

Parody was a frequent device of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century poets, and any song or poem which achieved some measure of popularity was fair game. "She Lay All Naked in Her Bed" was frequently reprinted and so was a sitting target. The Cyprian Queen of the fourth stanza is an allusion to Venus Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love.

She lay all naked in her bed,
And I myself lay by;
No veil but curtains about her spread,
No covering but I.
Her head upon her shoulders seeks
To hang in careless wise,
All full of blushes were her cheeks,
And of wishes were her eyes.

Her blood still fresh into her face
As on a message came
To say that in another place
It meant another game.
Her cherry lip, moist, plump and fair,
Millions of kisses crown,
Which ripe and uncropt dangled there,
And weigh the branches down.

Her breasts that swelled so plump and high
Bred pleasant pain in me.
For all the world I do defy
The like felicity.
Her thighs and belly, soft and fair,
To me were only shown.
To have seen such meat, and not to have eat,
Would have angered any stone.

Her knees lay upward gently bent
And all lay hollow under,
As if on easy terms they meant
To fall, unforced, asunder.
Just so the Cyprian Queen did lie,
Expecting in her bower,
When too long stay had kept the boy
Beyond his promised hour.

"Dull clown," quoth she, "why dost delay
Such proffered bliss to take?
Canst thou find out no other way
Similitudes to make?"
Mad with delight, I thundering
Threw my arms about her,
But, pox up 't! 'twas but a dream,
And so I lay without her.

Wit and Drollery, 1656

THE WILLING LOVER

One good turn deserves another. "The Willing Lover" is a parody of "She Lay All Naked in Her Bed."

She lay up to the navel bare
As was a willing lover,
Expecting—between hope and fear—
That I would come and cover.
Her hand beneath my waistband slips
To grope in busy wise,
Which caused a trembling in her lips,
And shivering in her eyes.

The blood out of her face did go,
As it on service went,
To second what was gone before,
When all its strength was spent.
Her cheeks and lips as coral red
Like roses were full blown:
Which fading straight, the leaves were spread,
*And so the———comes down.**

Her breasts then both panting were.
Such comfort wrought between us
That all the world, I dare to swear,
Would envy to have seen us.
Her belly and its provender
For me was kept in store;
Such news to hear and not to share,
Would have made a man a whore.

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*The dash is in the original; the reader is left to his own imagination.

Her legs were girt about my waist,
My hands under her crupper.
And who should say, "Now break your fast,
And come again to supper?"
Even as the God of War did knock,
As any other man will,
For heat of work at twelve o'clock
Kept Vulcan at his anvil.

"Mad wag," quoth she, "why doest thou make
Such haste thyself to rear?
Canst thou not know that for thy sake
The fair last all the year?"
Quiet and calm as are love's streams
I threw myself about her,
But a pox upon true jests and dreams—
I had better have laid without her.

Wit and Drollery, 1661

LOVE'S FOLLIES

Not quite a parody, "Love's Follies" is an answer to, or something of an extension upon "The Maiden's Denial," printed six years earlier. The girl is still resisting, but her remonstrances grow weaker and weaker.

Nay out, upon this fooling, for shame.
Nay pish, nay fie, in faith, you are to blame.
Nay come, this fooling must not be.
Nay pish, nay fie, you tickle me.

Nay out, upon 't in faither, I dare not do 't.
I'll bite, I'll scratch, I'll squeak, I'll cry out.
Nay come, this fooling must not be.
Nay pish, nay fie, you tickle me.

Your buttons scratch me; you ruffle my band.
You hurt my thighs; pray take away your hand.
The door stands ope' that all may see.
Nay pish, nay fie, you tickle me.

When you and I shall meet in a place,
Both together, face to face,
I'll not cry out; nay, you shall see.
Nay pish, nay fie, you tickle me.

But now I see my words are but in vain.
For [what] I have done, why should I complain?
Nay, to 't again; the way is free.
Since it's no more, pray tickle me.

Merry Drollerie, 1661

LUST DESCRIBED

For the Restoration rake, this song was undoubtedly slyly humorous. Not only does the poet have a curious old woman with rattling buttocks the projection of the beautiful love goddess, but, well satisfied, she rewards her lover with "a recruit," a fresh supply of funds.

Walking abroad in a morning,
When Venus herself was adorning,
I heard the birds sing to welcome the Spring,
Their music so sweetly according.

As I listened unto them,
My thoughts a voice did summon.
I spied an old whore, and a lusty, young rogue
Together as they sat a-wooing.

She tickled him under the sides
To make his courage to come.
She hoisted her thighs and she twinkled her eyes,
That dainty, fine, curious old woman.

If Venus and Mars so stout
Had joined together in battle,
There could not have been more claps and more
bangs,
For he made her old buttocks to rattle.

She gave him a lift for his thrust,
And caught him as he was a-coming,
And ever she cried, "You lusty, young rogue,
Will you murder a poor old woman?"

*She found that his spirits were sent,**
And that he was no more a-coming;
She gave him five shillings to make a recruit
Was not this a fine, lusty old woman?

Merry Drollerie, 1661

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*"Sent" may be a typographical error, the poet having written "spent."

A MAIDENHEAD

Back to basics. "Reak" in the last stanza means "to play pranks, or to dally in neighbor's houses."

What is that you call a maidenhead,
A thing oft smothered in bed,
Which few have now, which all have had,
Which freely given, makes one sad?

'Tis got for nought with little pain;
'Tis kept, but lost, not got again.
'Tis that you call a maidenhead,
By proving quick, 'tis ever dead.

A lamp which lasses bear about
Till putting in doth put it out;
An herb it is, but turns a weed
When first the husk receives the seed.

It is that a maidenhead we call,
A thing by standing made to fall;
It is a maidenhead, say we,
That's kept by holding close the knee.

A thing which youths do oft lurch,
Which brides do seldom bear to church;
At fifteen rare, at eighteen strange,
Which either lose when two do change.

That flits when maidens begin to reak.
Whene'er it parts, it makes them squeak,
And being gone, they straight repent:
This by a maidenhead is meant.

Merry Drollerie, 1661; errata from another version printed in *Wit's Interpreter*, 1757

The soundness of which the reader may judge for himself. "Green sickness" is an illness in young girls characterized by menstrual disorders which, according to folklore, may be remedied by sexual intercourse.

If thou wilt know how to choose a shrew,
Come listen unto me.
I'll tell you the signs, and the very, very lines
Of love's physiognomy.

If her hair be brown, with a flaxen crown,
And graced with a nutmeg hue,
Both day and night, she's best for delight,
And her color everlasting true.

If her forehead be high, with a rolling eye,
And lips that will sweetly melt,
The thing below is better, you know,
Although it be oftener felt.

If her hair be red, she'll sport in the bed,
But take heed of the danger though,
For if she carry fire in her upper attire,
What a devil doth she carry below?

If she be maid, and in virgin estate,
Inclined to the sickness green,
Some raw fruit give her to open her liver,
Her stomach and the thing between.

If her face and her neck have here and there
a speck,
Ne'er stick, but straight you go astride her,
For it hath been try'd and never denied
Such flesh ne'er fails the rider.

If none of these thy fancy will please,
Go seek thy complexion store,
And take for thy saint a lady that will paint
Such beauties thou mayst adore.

If beauty do write in her face red and white,
And Cupid his flowers there breed,
It pleaseth the eye, but the rose will die,
As soon as it runs to seed.

Merrie Drollerie, 1661

THE CHARACTER OF A MISTRESS

This is a long series of plays upon words and rather heavy handed *double entendres* set to music. The word play in the third stanza stems from a popular belief of the period that the nightingale sings its sad song while pressing its breast against the thorns of a rose bush. The "virginal" of the fifth stanza is a noun, the name of the keyboard instrument which eventually developed into the piano. "Cunny" is the common name for a rabbit.

My mistress is a shuttle cock,
Composed of cork and feather.
Each battledore sets on her dock,
And bumps her on the leather.
But cast her off which way you will,
She will recoil to another still.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a tennis ball
Composed of cotton fine.
She is often struck against the wall,
And banded under-line.
But if you will her mind fulfill,
You must pop her in the hazard still.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a nightingale;
So sweetly she can sing.
She is as fair as Philomel,
The daughter of a king.
And in the darksome nights so thick,
She loves to lean against a prick.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a ship of war,
With shot discharged at her.
The poop hath incurred many a scar
Even both by wind and water.
But as she grapples, at the last
She drowns the man, pulls down his mast.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a virginal,
And little cost will string her.
She's often rear'd against the wall
For every man to finger.
But to say truth, if you will her please,
You must run division on her keys.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a cunny fine.
She's of the softest skin.
And if you please to open her,
The best part lies within,
And in her cunny-burrow may
Two tumblers and a ferret play.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is the moon so bright.
I wish that I could win her.
She never walks but in the night,
And bears a man within her,
Which on his back bears ricks and thorns,
And once a month, she brings him horns.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a tinder-box.
(Would I had such a one!)
Her steel endureth many a knock
Both by the flint and stone.
And if you stir the tinder much,
The match will fire at every touch.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

My mistress is a Puritan;
She will not swear an oath.
But for to lie with any man,
She is not very loath.
But pure to pure, and there's no sin,
There's nothing lost that enters in.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

But why should I my mistress call
A shuttle cock or bauble,
A ship of war, or tennis ball,
Which things be variable?
But to command her, I'll say no more
Than my mistress is an arrant whore.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la.

Merry Drollerie, 1661

CONTENTMENT

The careless typography and printing of the times flawed this poem almost past the point of redemption. In the first stanza, the poet argues for a girl that's like a fish "in holding up her belly/for to receive, and to conceive/The most heroic jelly." He then goes on:

Although she be a saint that's free
From any such intention,
She may be bold (hang her that's cold!)
With a timorous apprehension:
Let danger come, have at her bum.
Give me that girl that stands to 't,
And when it's lank, does advance her flank
And lay her helping hand to 't.

To make it rise betwixt her thighs
And firk her is a pleasure.
Though he be stout, he ne'er comes out,
But he wants his [full] measure
If he have a yard. It will be hard
If he half a one produces.
(When he's so short, you may thank her for 't.
Oh, those are gross abuses!)

My mistress, she is very free,
And fancies well my temper.
Sweet rogue, she loves the merry shoves
And is clear of all distemper.
When I stand to it, she needs must do it,
For she is composed [for] pleasure,
And does invite me to delight [me].
I exhaust my chiefest treasure.

My mistress, she is very free,
And sings and frolics neatly.
Besides all this, she does nobly kiss,
And does her work completely,
For which I love her, and none above her,
And she loves me for the same too;
But that I fear you'd soon be there,
I would disclose her name too.

Merry Drollerie, 1661

THERE WERE THREE BIRDS

This drinking song, apparently of folk origins, is not quite so innocent as the first lines would suggest. "Birds," then as now, meant "men," and "wimble" in the chorus is the older name for an "auger."

There were three birds that built very low,
The first and the second cry'd, "Have at her toe."
The third went merrily in and in, in,
And the third went merrily in.
Oh, never went wimble in timber more nimble
With so little screwing and knocking on 't in,
With so little knocking in.

There were three birds that built on a pin.
The first and the second cry'd, "Have at her shin."
The third he went merrily in and in, in,
The third he went merrily in.
Oh, never went wimble in timber more nimble
With so little screwing and knocking on 't in,
With so little knocking in.

There were three birds that built on a tree.
The first and the second cry'd, "Have at her knee."
And the third he went merrily in and in, in,
And the third he went merrily in.
Oh, never went wimble in timber more nimble
With so little screwing and knocking on 't in,
With so little knocking in.

There were three birds that built very high.
The first and the second cry'd, "Have at her thigh."
The third he went merrily in and in, in,
The third he went merrily in.
Oh, never went wimble in timber more nimble
With so little screwing and knocking on 't in,
With so little knocking in.

There were three birds that built on a stump.
The first and the second cry'd, "Have at her rump."
The third he went merrily in and in, in,
And the third he went merrily in.
Oh, never went wimble in timber more nimble
With so little screwing and knocking on 't in,
With so little knocking in.

Merry Drollerie, 1661

THE MAID A-BATHING

The joys of a pastoral life, of shepherds and milkmaids, of birds singing sweetly frequently turn up in the poetry of the Seventeenth Century. It was sheer fantasy, and none of the gallants or ladies was likely to trade the sophisticated life of London and the court for the humdrum existence of rural estates. Most of the pastoral paeans were concerned with less amorous encounters than this one.

Upon a Summer's day
'Bout middle of the morn,
I spied a lass who lay
Stark naked as she was born.
'Twas by a running pool,
Within a meadow green,
And there she lay to cool,
Not thinking to be seen.

Then did she by degrees
Wash every part in rank:
Her arms, her breasts, her thighs,
Her belly and her flank.
Her legs she opened wide;
My eyes I let down-steal
Until there I espied
Dame Nature's privy seal.

I stript me to the skin,
And boldly stepped unto her.
Thinking her love to win,
I thus began to woo her:
"Sweetheart, be not so coy.
Time's sweet in pleasures spent."
She frown'd, and cry'd, "Away!"
Yet smiling, gave consent.

Then blushing, down she slid,
Seeming to be amazed,
But heaving up her head,
Again she on me gazed.
I, seeing that, lay down,
And boldly 'gan to kiss,
And she did smile, and frown,
And so fell to our bliss.

Then lay she on the ground
As though she had been sped,
As women in a swoon
Yield up, and yet not dead.
So did this lively maid,
When hot blood fill'd her vein,
And coming to herself she said,
"I thank you for your pain."

Merry Drollerie, 1661

LOVE'S DREAM

The poetic muse never seems to want for new and clever ways of describing sexual intercourse. This time the Olympian battle between the gods of war and love gives way to a stag hunt. (The "pricket" is a buck in his second year). The poet's lament that the girl has crowned her head with a willow is a delicate way of saying that she is a virgin.

I dreamt my love lay in her bed;
It was my chance to take her.
Her arms and legs abroad were spread;
She slept. I durst not wake her.
O pity it were, that one so rare
Should crown her head with willow.
The tresses of her golden hair
Did crown her lovely pillow.

Methought her belly was a hill—
Much like a mount of pleasure—
At foot thereof there springs a well
The depth no man can measure.
About the pleasant mountain head,
There grows a lofty thicket
Whither two beagles travelled
To rouse a lively pricket.

They hunted him with cheerful cry
About that pleasant mountain
Till he with heat was forced to fly
And slip into that fountain.
The dogs, they followed to the brink
And there at him they baited.
They plunged about and would not sink;
His coming out they waited.

Then forth he came as one half lame
All very faint and tired.
Betwixt her legs, he hung his head,
As heavy heart desired.
My dogs then being refreshed again
And she of sleep bereaved,
She dreamt she had me in her arms
And she was not deceived.

Merry Drollerie, 1661; *Percy Folio Manuscript,* ca. 1620

A SONG BY A PERSON OF QUALITY

Although "persons of quality," which is to say the landed nobility, wrote a number of songs, in most cases they did not put their name on their work. One reason was that they preferred to avoid—at all costs—anything that smacked of the world of commerce, including publication for sale. The anonymity too may have made them more bold in their choice of subjects.

Hold, hold, and no further advance,
For I'm cast in a trance,
If an inch more you give,
I'm not able to live.
So now 'tis pretty well, my love.
Yet if you will,
You may somewhat further shove;
But do not kill!
I die, I die, my breath's almost gone.
Pray, let me sleep, and I'll wake anon.

Westminster Drollery, Part I, 1671

THE WOOING ROGUE

This parody of Christopher Marlowe's famous "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"—already answered by Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" some 80 years before this was published—may well be the most scabrous in the English language. On the other hand, it may be a good deal more accurate a picture of rural life than was Marlowe's idyllic pastoral.

Come live with me, and be my whore,
And we will beg from door to door,
Then under a hedge, we'll sit and louse us
Until the beadle comes to rouse us.
And if they'll give us no relief,
Thou shalt turn whore and I'll turn thief.
Thou shalt turn whore and I'll turn thief.

If thou canst rob, then I can steal,
And we'll eat roast meat at every meal.
Nay, we'll eat white bread every day,
And throw our mouldy crusts away.
And twice a day, we will be drunk
And then at night I'll kiss my punk.
And then at night I'll kiss my punk.

And when we both shall have the pox,
We then shall want both shirts and smocks
To shift each other's mangy hide
That is with itch so pockified.
We'll take some clean ones from a hedge,
And leave our old ones for a pledge.
And leave our old ones for a pledge.

Westminster Drollery, Part I, 1671; erratum from *Windsor Drollery,* 1672

A SONG

The woods are ever full of lamenting damsels or coupling lovers. Indeed, the poetic countryside is so crowded that the young lass in this song is certain to meet a young man who can service her.

As I walked in the woods one evening of late,
A lass was deploring her hapless estate.
In a languishing posture, poor maid, she appears
All swelled with her sighs, and blub'd with her tears.
She sighed and she sobbed, and I found it was all
For a little of that which Harry gave Doll.

At last she broke out, [and] wretched she said,
"Will no youth come to succour a languishing maid
With what he with ease and with pleasure may give,
Without which, alas, poor I cannot live?
Shall I never leave sighing and crying and all
For a little of that which Harry gave Doll?

"At first when I saw a young man in the place,
My color would fade, and then flush my face.
My breath would grow short, and I'd shiver all o'er.
My breast never popped up and down so before.
I scarce knew for what, but now find it was all
For a little of that which Harry gave Doll."

Westminster Drollery, Part II, 1672

DILDOIDES
A Burlesque Poem
by Samuel Butler, Gent.

Occasioned by the burning of a hogshead of those commodities at Stocks-Market, in the year 1672, pursuant to an Act of Parliament then made for the prohibiting of French goods.

Such a sad tale prepare to hear,
As claims from either sex a tear.
Twelve dildoes (means for the support
Of aged lechers of the Court)
Were lately burnt by impious hand
Of trading rascals of the land,
Who envying their curious fame,
Exposed those priapuses to the flame.
O! barbarous times, where deities
Are made themselves a sacrifice.
Some were composed of shining horns,
More precious than ten unicorns.

Some were of wax, where every vein,
And every fiber were made plain.
Some were for tender virgins fit,
Some for the wide, salacious slit
Of a rank lady, tho' so torn,
She hardly feels when child is born.
Dildoe has nose, [yet] cannot smell.
No stink can his great courage quell;
At sight of plaster, he'd ne'er fail*
Nor faintly ask, "What do you ail?"
Women must have both youth and beauty,
E'er the damn'd rogue will do his duty,
And then sometimes he will not stand to
Do what gallant or mistress can do.

---

*Medicated plasters were widely employed to treat venereal disease.

But I too long have left my heroes,
Who fell into worse hands than Nero's;
Twelve of them shut up in a box,
*Martyrs as true as are in Fox,**
Deep under lawful traffic hidden,
Were seiz'd upon as goods forbidden;
When counsel grave, of deepest beard,
*Was call'd from out the City herd;***
But see the fate of cruel treachery:
Those goats in head—but not in lechery—
Forgetting each his wife and daughter,
Condemned those dildoes to the slaughter.
Cuckolds with rage were blinded so,
They did not their preservers know.
One, less fanatic than the rest,
Stood up and thus himself addrest:
"These dildoes may do harm, I know,
But pray what is it may not so?
Plenty hath often made men proud,
And above Law advanc'd the crowd.
Religion's self hath ruin'd nations,
And caused vast depopulations.
Yet no wise people have refused 'em
Because that fools sometimes abused 'em.
*Unless you fear some merry griggs****
Will wear false p[rick]s as perriwigs,
And being but to small ones born,
Will great ones have of wax and horn.

---

*Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, virtually mandatory reading.

**"The City" was in London's business district; the counselors then were the financial elite.

***Wags or pranksters.

Since even that promotes our gain,
Methinks unjustly we complain.
If ladies rather choose to handle
Our wax in dildoe, than in candle,
Much good may 't do 'em, so they pay for 't,
And that the merchant never stays for 't.
For, neighbors, is 't not all one whether
In p[rick]s or shoes they wear our leather?
Whether of horn they make a comb
Or instruments to chafe the womb?
Like you, I Monsieur Dildoe hate,
But the invention let's translate.
You treat 'em may[hap] like Turks and Jews.
I will have two for my own use.
Priapus was a Roman deity,
And such hath been the world's variety,
I am resolved I'll none provoke,
From the humble garlic to the oak."
He paused, another straight step'd in
With limber p[rick], and grisly chin,
And thus began,

"For soldiers maim'd by chance of war,
We artificial limbs prepare.
Why then should we bear such a spite
To lechers hurt in amorous fight?
And what the French send for relief,
We thus condemn like witch and thief.
Dildoe that monsieur sure intends
For his French-pox to make amends,
For such, without the least disgrace,
Might fill the lusty foreman's place,
And make our elder girls ne'er care for 't,
Tho' 'twere their fortune to dance barefoot.
Lechers, whom clap or drink disable,
Might here have dildoes to their navel,
And with false heat and member too
Rich widow for convenience woo.

Did not a lady of great honor
Marry a footman waiting on her?
Were one of these timely applied,
'T had eas'd her lust and sav'd her pride.
Safely her ladyship might have spent
Whilst such gallants in pocket went.
Honor itself might use the trade
Whilst pego goes in masquerade.*
Which of us able to prevent is
His girl from lying with his 'prentice
Unless we other means provide
For nature to be satisfied?
And what more proper than this engine,
Which would outdo 'em, should three men join?
I therefore hold it very foolish
Things so convenient to abolish,
Which, if you burn, we safely may
*To your own Act the ruin lay,***
And all that cast themselves away."

At this all parents' heart began
To melt apace, and not a man
In all the assembly but found
His reasons solid were and sound.
Poor widows straight with voices shrill
With shouts of joy the hall did fill:
For wicked Pin[tle]s have no mind to her
Who hath no money, nor no jointure.

---

*Penis.

**Butler is punning on the word "act", since the "Buy British" Act of Parliament was passed under pressure from the same mercantile types defending the poem's heroes.

When one in haste broke through the throng
And cry'd aloud, "Are we among
Heathens or infidels, to let 'scape us
This image of the lewd Priapus?
Green-sickness girls will soon adore him,
And wickedly fall down before him.
For him each superstitious hussy
*Will temple build of tuzzy muzzy.**
Idoltary will fill the land
And all true p[unk]s forget to stand.
Cursed be the wretch who found those arts
Of losing us the women's hearts.
For, pray, henceforth who'll not refuse one,
When she hath all that she hath use on?
Or how shall I make her pity me,
Who enjoys man in this epitome?
Besides, what great derogation
From sacred rites of propagation,
When turning th' action of the tool
(Whence we all come) [to] ridicule.
The man that would have thunder made
*With brazen head**—*far coarser made—*
In my mind did not half so ill do
As he that found that wicked dildoe.
Le's then, with common indignation
Expell these Priapuses out o' the nation,
From all these instruments of lewdness
And ladies, take it not for rudeness;
For never was so base a treachery
Designed by men 'gainst female lechery.

---

*The female pudendum.
**I.e., the man who would have broken wind brazenly.

Men would kind husbands seem, and able,
With feigned lust, and borrow'd bawble.
Lovers themselves would rest their passion
In this fantastic new French fashion;
But the wise City will take care
That men shall vend no such false ware."

See here the unstable vulgar's mind*
Shook like a leaf with every wind;
No sooner had he spoke, but all
With deep rage for faggots call.
The reasons that before seem'd good
Now are no longer understood.
This last speech had the cruel power
To bring these dildoes' [final] hour.
Priapus thus in box oppressed,
Burnt like a phoenix in its nest,
But with this fatal diff'rence, dies:
We find no dildoes from his ashes rise.

This virtually unknown satire by the author of *Hudibras,* the mock romance which railed against the hypocrisy of the Puritans, was probably written shortly after the immolation of the goods. Butler died in 1680, virtually penniless at the age of 68, having achieved a sizeable reputation during his lifetime as a political commentator and satirist. In spite of appeals to Charles II on behalf of the poet, Butler was not a court-supported writer as were the other known authors in this collection. "Dildoides" is reprinted here from the version printed in London in 1706 and sold by J. Nutt, a copy of which is in the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California. A second text from "The Cabinet of Love"

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*Common person, the "rabble."

printed in *The Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscomon and Dorset* (London, 1758) has been used to made editorial corrections in the Nutt text.

A RANT AGAINST MARRIAGE

In sixteen lines, the rake's philosophy regarding this societal institution. Apparently, it was more of an ideal than an actuality; even that very archetype of the Restoration rake, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, fell in love and married. "Bubbl'd" in the second stanza means "swindled" or "tricked."

He that marries a girl that's fair,
Though he be horn'd, he need not despair,
As long as his cuckolding wife takes care,
By damning herself, to save him.
But he that has wedded an ugly whore,
Runs every day in the Devil's score.
He has one hell on earth and another in store,
Old Nich'las will certainly have him.

For, in truth, all that are marry'd are bubbl'd,
While bachelors have their advantage doubl'd
For they have the pleasure, and never are troubled
With wife, or a child, to care for.
And when with sorrow their hearts are sunk,
They may go to the tavern and be drunk,
And never be dogg'd by a bitcherly punk,
To ask them why or wherefore.

R[obt.] V[eel], *New Court Songs and Poems,* 1672

A DIALOGUE

Duets such as this were frequent in Restoration theatrical presentations just as Shakespeare had earlier used songs to provide contrast to the steady speech of his actors. These musical interludes comment on the action rather than advance it, much the same as in today's musical comedies.

Woman: *Hold, hold, sir, you strike me sore.*
Will you murder the vanquished, and never give o'er?

Man: *No,* (cannibal-like) *on thy flesh I will feed.*
'Tis not mercy to pity, though thou doest bleed.

Woman: *Help, help, now it comes; it comes down.*
You've tickled me so that I'm ready to swoun.

Man: *Fear not, there needs no recovering skill.*
'Tis a pleasant encounter that never does kill.

Woman: *Oh, why then d' you rub me, d' you shake me so, fie?*
Can't you let a poor woman die?

Bristol Drollery, 1674

ON THE HAPPY CORYDON AND PHYLLIS

This is credited to Sir Charles Sedley, one of the roistering courtiers in Charles II's inner circle. Poetry for the members of that group was an idle pastime, a courtly accomplishment of little time and no study. A contemporary of the Restoration rakes in *The Character of a Town Gallant,* 1680, noted archly, "His whole library consists of *The Academy of Compliments, Venus Undress'd, Westminster Drollery,* half a dozen plays, and a bundle of bawdy songs in manuscript."* Erudition was not their strong point in general nor Sedley's in particular. There is some disagreement as whether or not Sedley himself wrote the fifth line tagged to the end of each stanza, or whether it was added by some sly wit to satirize the whole return-to-nature school of poesy. Sedley, it should be said, was perfectly capable, and, all things considered, probably did the deed himself.

Young Corydon and Phyllis
Sat in a lovely grove,
Contriving crowns of lilies,
Repeating toys of love.
And something else, but what I dare not name.

But as they were a-playing,
She ogled so the swain,
It saved her plainly saying,
"Let's kiss to ease our pain,
And something else, but what I dare not name."

---

*Quoted by G. Thorn Drury, ed., *Covent Garden Drollery, A Miscellany of 1672* (London, 1928), p. 128.

A thousand times he kissed her,
Laying her on the green,
But as he further pressed her,
A pretty leg was seen,
And something else, but what I dare not name.

So many beauties viewing,
His ardour still increased,
And, greater joys pursuing,
He wandered o'er her breast,
And something else, but what I dare not name.

A last effort she trying
His passion to withstand,
Cried, but 'twas faintly crying,
"Pray take away your hand,
And something else, but what I dare not name."

Young Corydon, grown bolder,
The minutes would improve;
"This is the time," he told her,
"To show you how I love,
And something else, but what I dare not name."

The nymph seemed almost dying,
Dissolved in amorous heat;
She kissed and told him, sighing,
"My dear, your love is great,
And something else, but what I dare not name."

But Phyllis did recover
Much sooner than the swain;
She blushing asked her lover,
"Shall we not kiss again,
And something else, but what I dare not name?"

Thus Love, his revels keeping,
Till nature at a stand,
From talk they fell to sleeping,
Holding each other's hand,
And something else, but what I dare not name.

Anonymous broadside, ca. 1680

SODOM: AN EXCERPT

It would be hard to find a literary figure who has suffered more at the hands of the self-righteous than John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester (1647-1680). Rake, debauchee, owner of what one writer has called "a sulphurous halo," Rochester was at one and the same time a court gallant, a brilliant wit, a country squire and devoted husband, a fornicator of unexcelled proportions, playwright, poet, panderer, veteran of bloody naval battles and a deeply skeptical philosopher. His reputation as a rake, factual as well as legendary, over-shadows his accomplishments as a literary figure. The eroticism of his poetry has until recently kept it from being fully appreciated. It was censored rather than studied.

This has provoked a furious literary squabble. Some of Rochester's defenders argue that he isn't responsible for the hundreds of bawdy poems attributed to him; others insist that whatever claim Rochester might have to literary importance lies particularly in the ribald and obscene poems he allegedly wrote. Some of the Earl's enthusiasts even go so far as to deny that their hero wrote the notorious *Sodom,* hoping thus to scrub that "sulphurous halo." But *Sodom,* a five-act play actually presented at court, is

Rochester's.* His reputation as a satirist and wit could rest solely on this one work, were it published openly.

Henry Spencer Ashbee's summary of *Sodom* in *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum* suggests some of the play's flavor. "Act 2, scenes 1 and 2 are played in 'a pleasant Garden adorn'd with many Statues of naked men and women in various postures, in the middle of the garden is a woman representing a fountain standing on her head, and pissing bolt upright.' Soft music and a song are heard, after which the Queen [Cuntigratia] enters, attended by *Officina, Fuckadilla, Clitoris* and *Cunticula.*"

Officina: *Sure Madam, he must think with much remorse*
On your divorcement from his royal tarse;
The day of marriage you may justly rue,
Since he will neither swive, nor suffer you.

Cuntigratia: *That tyranny doth much augment my grief,*
I can command all but my cunt's relief;
My courses have been stopped with grief and care;
In all his pleasures I have not a share.

---

*The editor agrees with Gershon Legman's flat assertions in *The Horn Book* (New York, c. 1964), p. 95, 100, 194 and 374, that Rochester is responsible for *Sodom*. The pseudonymous Pisanus Fraxi (Henry Spence Ashbee) whose collection of erotica now forms the bulk of the British Museum holdings in this area also came to the same conclusion. In his *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum*, reprint edition (New York, 1962), p. 328, Ashbee notes: "Although *Sodom* has been attributed to an otherwise unknown writer, Fishbourne, who 'belonged to the inns of court,' yet it is generally

Ashbee continues: "The maids of honour condole with their sovereign, and assure her from experience that there are many better men than the King. *Cuntigratia* declares that she is not jealous."

Officina: *Were I as you, a pintle I would have,*
Though it depriv'd me of the crown he gave;
Though he a tyrant to your honour be,
Your cunt may claim a subject's liberty.

Cuntigratia: *Your counsel bravely doth my cares expell,*
Whom would you wish me, who would swive me well?

Officina: *Buggeranthos to a hair your cunt would rick.*

Cuntigratia: *The gen'ral! Oh, I long to see his prick.*
They say he fucks all women to a trance.

Fuckadilla: *Madam, you'll say so when you see his lance.*

---

supposed to be by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and to this supposition I am disposed to incline, in spite of Rochester's having most strenuously disowned it." Rochester's disownment of *Sodom* is supposed to have occurred in the poem attributed to the Earl "Upon the Author of a Play Call'd *Sodom*" which violently scores the playwright. However, James Thorpe proves that, in fact, Rochester did not write the disavowal. Cf. Thorpe's edition of Rochester's *Poems upon Several Occasions* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1950), p. 188-89.

Clitoris: *He is a man no doubt . . .*

Cunticula: *He has such charms,*
You'd swear you had a stallion in your arms,
He swives with so much vigour, in a word,
His prick is as good metal as his sword.

Cuntigratia: *With open cunt then swift to him I'll fly,*
I'll hug, and kiss, and bear up, till I die;
Oh! let him swive me to eternity.

"In the third scene," summarizes Ashbee, "the Queen is discovered 'in a chair of state, frigged by the Lady Officina. All the rest pull out their dildoes, and frigg in point of honour.' "

Cuntigratia: *So! there's more yet, you do not make it spurt,*
You frig as if you were afraid to hurt.

Officina: *Madam, the fault in Virtuoso lies,*
He should have made it of a larger size,
This dildoe by a handful is too short.

Cuntigratia: *Let him with speed be sent for to the Court.*

Fuckadilla: *Madam, our dildoes are not to compare*
With what I've seen.

Officina: *Indeed, they're paltry ware.*

"The Queen becomes impatient for the arrival of *Buggeranthos,* and orders *Fuckadilla* to wile away the time with a bawdy song. The scene closes with a dance of naked men and women, in which they copulate, 'after which the women sigh, and the men look simple and sneak off.' "

Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

This selection of Rochester's poetry—sometimes erotic, sometimes not—was culled to underscore the man's world-weary wit.

A DESCRIPTION OF MAIDENHEAD

Have you not in a chimney seen
A sullen faggot, wet and green?
How coyly it receives the heat
And at both ends does fume and sweat?

So fares it with the harmless maid
When first upon her back she's laid;
But the kind, experienced dame
Cracks, and rejoices in the flame.

THE DEBAUCHEE

I rise at eleven; I dine about two.
I get drunk before seven, and the next thing I do:
I send for my whore, when for fear of a clap
I spend in her hand, and I spew in her lap;
There we quarrel and scold, till I fall asleep,
When the bitch, growing bold, to my pocket does creep;

Then slyly she leaves me, and, to revenge the affront,
At once she bereaves me of money and cunt.
If, by chance, then I wake, hot-headed and drunk,
What a coil do I make for the loss of my punk!
I storm, and I roar, and I fall in a rage,
And missing my whore, I bugger my page.
Then crop-sick all morning, I rail at my men,*
And in bed I lie yawning till eleven again.

THE PERFECT ENJOYMENT**

Since now my Sylvia is as kind as fair,
Let wit and joy succeed my dull despair.
Oh, what a night of pleasure was the last,
A full reward for all my troubles past;
And on my head if future mischief fall
This happy night shall make amends for all.
Nay, though my Sylvia's love should turn to hate,
I'll think of this, and die contented with my fate.

Twelve was the lucky minute when we met
And on her bed were close together set;
Though listening spies might be perhaps too near,
Love filled our hearts; there was not room for fear.
Now whilst I strive her melting heart to move
With all the powerful eloquence of love,
In her fair cheeks I saw the color rise
And an unusual softness in her eyes.

---

*Diarrhea, or what is sometimes called "Montezuma's revenge."

**Attributed to Rochester, but not proven.

Gently they look, and I with joy adore
That only charm they never had before.
The wounds they made, her tongue was used to heal,
But now these gentle enemies reveal
A secret, which that friend would still conceal.
My eyes, transported too with amorous rage,
Seem fierce with expectation to engage;
But fast she holds my hands, and close her thighs,
And what she longs to do, with frowns denies.
A strange effect on foolish women wrought,
Bred in disguises, and by custom taught;
Custom, that prudence sometimes overrules,
But serves instead of reason to the fools!
Custom, which all the world to slavery brings,
The dull excuse for doing silly things.
She, by this method of her foolish sex,
Is forced awhile me and herself to vex.
But now, when thus we had been struggling long,
Her limbs grow weak, and her desires strong.
How can she hold to let the hero in?
He storms without and love betrays within.
Her hands at last, to hide her blushes, leave
The fort unguarded, willing to receive
My fierce assault, made with a lover's haste,
Like lightning piercing, and as quickly past.

Thus does fond nature with her children play,
Just shows us joy, then snatches it away!
'Tis not th' excess of pleasure makes it short;
The pain of love's as raging as the sport.
And yet, alas! that lasts; we sigh all night
With grief, but scarce one moment with delight.
Some little pain may check her kind desire,
But not enough to make her once retire.
Maids wounds for pleasure bear, as men for praise;

Here honor heals, there love the smart allays.
The world, if just, would harmful courage blame,
And this, more innocent, reward with fame.
Now she her well-contented thoughts employs
On her past fears, and on her future joys,
Whose harbinger did roughly all remove
To make fit room for great, luxurious love.
Fond of the welcome guest, her arms embrace
My body, and her hands a better place
Which with one touch so pleased and proud does grow
It swells beyond the grasp that made it so,
Confinement scorns in any straighter walls
Than those of love, where it contented falls.

Though twice o'erthrown, she more inflamed does rise
And will to the last drop fight out love's prize.
She, like some Amazon in story, proves
That overcomes the hero whom she loves.
In the close strife she takes so much delight
She then can think of nothing but the fight.
With joy she lays him panting at her feet,
And with more joy does his recovery meet.
Her trembling hands first gently raise his head—
She almost dies for fear that he is dead—
Then binds his wounds up with a busy hand
And with that balm enables him to stand.
Till by her eyes she conquers him once more
And wounds him deeper than she did before.
Though fallen from the top of Pleasure's Hill
With longing eyes we look up thither still;
Still thither our unwearied wishes tend
Till we that height of happiness ascend
By gentle steps; the ascent itself exceeds
All joys, but that alone to which it leads.

First then, so long and lovingly we kiss
As if, like doves, we knew no dearer bliss.
Still in one mouth our tongues together play,
While groping hands are pleased no less than they.
Thus clinged together, now a while we rest
Breathing our souls into each other's breast.
Here would my praise, as well as pleasure dwell;
Enjoyment's self I scarcely like so well.
The little this comes short in rage and strength
Is largely recompensed with endless length.
This is a joy would last, if we could stay;
But love's too eager to admit delay
And hurries us along so smooth a way.
Now, wanton with delight, we nimbly move
Our pliant limbs in all the shapes of love;
Our motions not like those of gamesome fools,
Whose active bodies show their heavy souls,
But sports of love, in which a willing mind
Makes us as able as our hearts are kind.
At length, all languishing, and out of breath,
Panting, as in the agonies of death,
We lie entranced, till one provoking kiss
Transports our ravished souls to paradise.
Oh, heaven of love, thou moment of delight!
Wronged by my words, my fancy does thee right.
Methinks I lie all melting in her charms
And fast locked up within her legs and arms;
Bent are our minds, and all our thoughts on fire,
Just laboring in the pangs of fierce desire,
At once, like misers wallowing in their store,
In full possession, yet desiring more.

Thus with repeated pleasures, while we waste
Our happy hours, that like short minutes past,
To such a sum of bliss our joys amount,
The number now becomes too great to count.

Silent as night are all sincerest joys,
Like deepest waters running with least noise.
But now at last, for want of further force,
From deeds, alas, we fall into discourse;
A fall, which each of us in vain bemoans,
A greater fall than that of kings from thrones.
The tide of pleasure flowing now no more,
We lie like fish left gasping on the shore;
And now, as after fighting, wounds appear
Which we in heat did neither feel nor fear.
She, for her sake, entreats me to give o'er
And yet, for mine, would gladly suffer more.
Her words are coy, while all her motions woo
And when she asks me if it please me too
I rage to show how well, but 'twill not do.

Thus would hot love run itself out of breath
And, wanting rest, find it too soon in death
Did not wise nature, with a gentle force,
Restrain its rage and stop its headlong course.
Indulgently severe, she well does spare
This child of hers which most deserves her care.

THE IMPERFECT ENJOYMENT

Fruition was the question in debate,
Which like so hot a Casuist I state
That she my freedom urged as my offense,
To teach my reason to subdue my sense;
But yet this angry cloud, that did proclaim
Volleys of thunder, melted into rain;
And this adulterate stamp of seeming nice
Made feigned virtue but a bawd to vice.
For, by a compliment that's seldom known,
She thrusts me out, and yet invites me home.

And these denials but advance delight
As prohibition sharpens appetite;
For the kind curtain raising my esteem
To wonder at the opening of the scene,
When of her breast her hands the guardians were,
Yet I salute each sullen officer;
Though, like the flaming sword before my eyes,
They block the passage of my paradise;
Nor could these guardian hands so guard the coin,
But love, where it cannot purchase, may purloin;
For though her breasts are hid, her lips are prize
To make me rich beyond my avarice;
Yet my ambition my affection fed,
To conquer both the white rose and red.
The event proved true, for on the bed she sat
And seemed to court what she had seemed to hate;
Heat of resistence had increased her fire
And weak defense is turned to strong desire.
What unkind influence could interpose
Where two such stars did in conjunction close?
Only too hasty zeal my hopes did foil,
Pressing to feed her lamp, I split my oil;
And that which (most reproach upon me hurled)
Was dead to her, gives life to all the world;
Nature's chief prop, and motion's sweetest source,
In me lost both their figure and their force.
Sad conquest, when it is the victor's fate;
Like prudent corporations, had we laid
A common stock by, we'd improved our trade;
But as a prodigal heir, I spent by the by
What, home directed, would serve her and I.
When next in such assaults I chance to be
Give me less vigor, more activity,
For love turns impotent, when strained too high,
His very cordials make him sooner die,
Evaporates in fume the fire so great.
Love's chemistry thrives best with equal heat.

TO CHLORIS

Fair Chloris in a pig-sty lay,
Her tender herd hard by her.
She slept; in murmuring gruntlings they,
Complaining of the scorching day,
Her slumbers thus inspire.

She dreamt, while she with careful pains
Her snowy arms employ'd,
In ivory pails, to fill our grains,
One of her love-convicted swains,
Thus hasting to her cried:

"Fly, nymph, oh, fly, e're 'tis too late,
A dear-lov'd life to save;
Rescue your bosom pig from fate,
Who now expires, hung in the gate
That leads to yonder cave.

"Myself had tried to set him free,
Rather than brought the news;
But I am so abhor'd by thee,
That ev'n thy darling's life from me,
I know thou wou'dst refuse."

Struck with the news, as quick she flies
As blushes to her face;
Not the bright lightning from the skies,
Nor love, shot from her brighter eyes,
Move half so swift a pace.

The plot, it seems, the lustful slave
Had laid against her honor;
Which not one god took care to save;
For he pursues her to the cave,
And throws himself upon her.

Now pierced is her virgin zone,
She feels the foe within it;
She hears a broken amorous groan,
The panting lover's fainting moan,
Just in the happy minute.

Frighted she wakes, and waking frigs,
Nature thus kindly eas'd,
In dreams rais'd by her murm'ring pigs,
And her own thumb between her legs,
She innocent and pleas'd.

UPON LEAVING HIS MISTRESS

'Tis not that I am weary grown
Of being yours, and yours alone,
But with what face can I incline
To damn you to be only mine?
You, whom some kinder Power did fashion,
By merit and by inclination
The joy at least of a whole nation.

Let meaner spirits of your sex
With humble aims their thoughts perplex
And boast, if, by their arts, they can
Contrive to make one happy man;
While, moved by an impartial sense,
Favours, like nature, you dispense
With universal influence.

See the kind seed-receiving earth
To every grain affords a birth.
On her no showers unwelcome fall;
Her willing womb retains 'em all.
And shall my Celia be confined?
No, live up to thy mighty mind,
And be the mistress of mankind.

TO CHOOSE A FRIEND BUT NEVER MARRY

To all young men that live to woo,
To kiss and dance, and tumble too,
Draw near and counsel take of me,
Your faithful pilot I will be;
Kiss whom you please, Joan, Kate, or Mary,
But still this counsel will you carry,
Never marry.

Court not a country lady, she
Knows not how to value thee.
She hath no amorous passion, but
*What Tray, or Quando has for slut.**
To lick, to whine, to frisk or cover,
She'll thee, or any other,
Thus to love her.

Her daughter she's now come to town
In a rich linsey-woolsy gown.
About her neck a valued prize:
*A necklace made of whiting eyes;***
*With list*** for garters 'bove her knee*
And breath that smells of firmity,
'S not for thee.

---

*"Tray" and "Quando" are traditional names for dogs.

**Small ornamental stones.

***A band of felt.

Of widows' witchcrafts have a care
For if they catch you in their snare,
You must as daily laborers do,
Be still a-shoving with your plow.
If any rest you do require,
They then deceive you of your hire,
And retire.

The maiden ladies of the town
Are scarcely worth your throwing down;
For when you have possession got
Of Venus' mark, or honey-pot,
There's such a stir with, marry me!
That one would half forswear to see
Any she.

If that thy fancy do desire
A glorious outside, rich attire,
Come to the Court, and there you'll find
Enough of such to please your mind.
But if you get too near their lap,
You're sure to meet with the mishap
Called a clap.

With greasy, painted faces dressed,
*With buttered hair, and fucused breast,**
Tongues with dissimulation tipped,
Lips which a million have sipped.
There's nothing got by such as these
But aches in shoulders, pains in knees,
For your fees.

---

*Fucus is a cosmetic.

A SONG

The most comprehensive of the many Restoration song collections was compiled by Thomas D'Urfey, poet-playwright-playboy (1653-1723). His six-volume collection, *Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy,* ran into five editions, and in its final form contained 1144 songs. Most of these anonymous offerings were written in the latter half of the Seventeenth Century, although some are much older. The first 350 songs in the collection were D'Urfey's own; the final four volumes were stuffed with the gleanings of other poets which D'Urfey cribbed willy-nilly. What follows is a sampling of the popular songs of the day which D'Urfey called his *Pills to Purge Melancholy.*

Ho boy, hey boy,
Come, come away, boy,
And bring me my longing desire;
A lass that is neat, and can well do the feat,
When lusty young blood is on fire.

Let her body be tall,
And her waist be small,
And her age not above eighteen;
Let her care for no bed, but here let spread
Her mantle upon the green.

Let her face be fair,
And her breasts be bare,
And a voice let her have that can warble;
Let her belly be soft, but to mount me aloft
Let her bounding buttocks be marble.

Let her have a cherry lip,
Where I nectar may sip,
Let her eyes be as black as a sloe;
Dangling locks I do love, so that those hang above
Are the same with what grows below

Oh, such a bonny lass
May bring wonders to pass,
And make me grow younger, and younger;
And when'er we do part, she'll be mad at the heart
That I'm able to tarry no longer.

FROM TWELVE YEARS OLD

A *double entendre*, the meaning of which is plain enough. In the seventh stanza, "Cat will to kind" means the girl's natural disposition leads her to fill her stomach—as the poem has it. "Mess" is a spread of meat.

From twelve years old, I oft have been told,
A pudding, it was a delicate bit;
I can remember my mother has said,
What a delight she had to be fed
With a pudding.

Thirteen being past, I long'd for to taste
What nature or art could make it so sweet;
For many gay lasses, about my age,
Perpetually speak on 't. That puts me in a rage
For a pudding.

Now at fifteen, I often have seen
Most maids to admire it so;
That their humor and pride is to say,
"O what a delight they have for to play
With a pudding."

When I am among some wives that are young
Who think they shall never give it due praise.
It is sweet; it is good; it is pleasant; still
They cry, they think they shall ne'er have their fill
Of a pudding.

Some ancient wives, who most of their lives
Have daily tasted of the like food,
Now for want of supplies do swear and grumble
That still they're able enough to mumble,
"A pudding."

The greater sort of the town and the Court,
When met, their tongues being tipp'd with wine,
How merry and jocund their tattles do run
To tell how they ended and how they begun
With a pudding.

Now, now I find, cat will to kind
Since all my heart and blood is on fire.
I am resolv'd whatever comes on 't
My fancy no longer shall suffer the want
Of a pudding.

For I'll to John, who says he has one
That's cramm'd as close as a cracker or squib,
Who ever is telling me when we do meet
Of the wishing, desires and sweetness they get
In a pudding.

I thought at first it never would burst;
It was hard as gristle or bone.
But by the rowling and trowling about,
How kindly and sweetly the marrow flew out
Of his pudding!

Well, since I ne'er was fed with such geer,
Until my John did prove so kind,
I made a request to prepare again
That I might continue in love with the strain
Of his pudding.

Then straight he brought what I little thought
Could ever have been in its former plight.
He rumbl'd and jumbl'd me o'er, and o'er,
Till I found he had almost wasted the store
Of his pudding.

Then the other mess I begg'd him to dress,
Which by my assistance was brought to pass.
But by his dullness and moving so slow,
I quickly perceiv'd the stuffing grew low
In his pudding.

Tho' he grew cold, my stomach did hold
With vigor to relish the other bit,
But all he could do could not furnish again,
For he swore he had left little more than the skin
Of his pudding.

A SCOTCH SONG

When a poet of the period wanted to be rude and/or crude, he usually cast his poem in the mouth of a Scots countryman. In the neat double-think of the times, this would excuse the offense. "A Scotch Song" is of some interest too in illustrating the variable standards of morality and forbidden speech. "Twat" is acceptable; the Anglo-Saxon verb "to piss" is fine; but the word "arse" is not.

As I went o'er yon misty moor—
'Twas on an evening late, sir—
There I met with a well-fared lass
Was spanning of her gate, sir.
I took her by the lily-white hand,
And by the twat I caught her.
I swear and vow, and tell you true,
She piss'd in my hand with laughter.

The silly poor wench, she lay so still
You'd swear she had been dead, sir.
The de'il a word but aw she said,
"But ay," and bow'd her head, sir.
"Kind sir," quoth she, "you'll kill me here,
But I'll forgive the slaughter.
You make such motions with your a-se
You'll split my sides with laughter."

In the original printing, "cunny" is besplattered with dashes in the same fashion that American publishers once printed words such as "f***", and "s***" and "b*****."

My mistress is a hive of bees in yonder flow'ry garden,
To her they come with laden thighs to ease them of their burden.
As under the bee-hive lieth the wax, and under the wax is honey,
So under her waist her belly is plac'd, and under that her cunny.

My mistress is a mine of gold, would that it were her pleasure
To let me dig within her mould, and roll among her treasure.
As under the moss the mould doth lie, and under the mould is money,
So under her waist her belly is plac'd, and under that her cunny.

My mistress is a morn of May which drops of dew down stilleth,
Where e'er she goes to sport and play, the dew down sweetly trilleth.
As under the sun the mist doth lie, so under the mist it is sunny,
So under her waist her belly is plac'd, and under that her cunny.

My mistress is a pleasant spring that yieldeth
store of water sweet
That doth refresh each wither'd thing lies
trodden under feet.
Her belly is both white and soft, and down as
any bunny
That many gallants wish full oft to play but with
her cunny.

My mistress hath the magic sprays; of late she
takes such wondrous pain
That she can pleasing spirits raise and also lay
them down again.
Such power hath my tripping doe, my little,
pretty bunny,
That many would their lives forego to play but
with her cunny.

THE SURPRISED NYMPH

Here, in nine stanzas, is a concise summary of the poetry of the Restoration. In six of the nine, the poet soars in lyrical flight; in the final three he plants both feet firmly on the ground.

The fourth and twentieth day of May,
Of all days in the year,
A virgin lady, fresh and gay,
Did privately appear.
Hard by a river side got she
And did sing loud the rather,
Cause she was sure she was secure
And had intent to bathe her.

With glittering, glancing, jealous eyes,
She slyly looks about
To see if any lurking spies
Were hid to find her out.
And being well resolv'd that none
Could see her nakedness,
She pull'd her robes off one by one,
And did herself undress.

Her purple mantle fring'd with gold
Her ivory hands unpinn'd.
It would have made a coward bold,
Or tempted a saint to 'a sinn'd.
She turned about and look'd around,
Quoth she, "I hope I'm safe."
Then her rosy petticoat
She presently put off.

The snow white smock which she had on
Transparently to deck her
Look'd like cambric or lawn
Upon an alabaster picture.
Through which array I did faintly spy
Her belly and her back;
Her limbs were straight and all was white
But that which should be black.

Into a fluent stream she leapt.
She looked like Venus' glass.
The fishes from all quarters crept
To see what angel 'twas.
She did so like a vision look,
Or fancy in a dream,
'Twas thought the sun the skies forsook,
And dropped into the stream.

Each fish did wish himself a man.
About her all were drawn.
And at the sight of her began
To spread abroad their spawn.
She turn'd to swim upon her back,
And so displayed her banner.
If Jove had then in Heaven been,
He would have dropped upon her.

A lad that long her love had been,
And could obtain no grace,
For all her prying lay unseen,
Hid in a secret place,
Who had often been repulsed
When he did come to woo her,
Pulled off his clothes and furiously
Did run and leap into her.

She squeaked, she cried, and down she dived;
He brought her up again.
He brought her o'er upon the shore,
And then—and then—and then—
As Adam did old Eve enjoy,
You may guess what I mean,
Because she all uncovered lay,
He covered her again.

With water'd eyes she pants and cries,
"I'm utterly undone.
If you will not be wed to me
E'er the next morning sun."
He answered her he ne'er would stir
Out of her sight till then.
"We'll both clasp hands in wedlock bands,
Marry, and to 't again."

A NEW SONG

Borrowing an older tune, the Restoration poets frequently satirized with tuneful malevolence various personages and happenings of the period. Apparently, this song refers to a family of five sisters and their mother—perhaps of the gentry—who roused the poet's ire.

In the Devil's country there lately did dwell
A crew of such whores as was n'er bred in Hell.
The devil himself he knows it full well,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

There were six of the gang, and all of a bud
Which opened as soon as got into the blood.
There are five to be hang'd, when the other proves good,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

But it seems they have hitherto sav'd all their lives,
Since they could not love honest, there's four made wives;
The other two they are not married but swives,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

The eldest the matron of t'other five imps,
As chaste as Diana, or any o' the nymphs;
Yet rather than daughter shall want it, she pimps,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

Damned proud and ambitious, both old and the young,
And not fit for honest men to come among,
A damned itch in their tail, and a sting in their tongue,
Sing tantara rara whores all, whores all,
Sing tantara rara whores all.

THE JOLLY TRADESMEN

The tools of the various crafts offer ample opportunity for even the slightest wit to wallow in suggestive wordplay. So they did.

Sometimes I am a tapster new
And skillful in my trade, sir.
I fill my pots most duly
Without deceit or froth, sir.
A spigot of two handfuls long
I use to occupy, sir,
And when I set a butt abroach,
Then shall no beer run by, sir.

Sometimes I am a butcher,
And then I feel fat ware, sir,
And if the flank be fleshed well,
I take no further care, sir.
But in I thrust my slaughtering-knife
Up to the haft with speed, sir.
For all that ever I can do,
I cannot make it bleed, sir.

Sometimes I am a baker
And bake both white and brown, sir.
I have as fine a wriggling-pole
As any in this town, sir.
But if my oven be over-hot,
I dare not thrust it in, sir.
For burning of my wriggling-pole,
My skill's not worth a pin, sir.

Sometimes I am a glover,
And can do passing well, sir.
In dressing of a doe-skin,
I know I do excell, sir.
But if by chance a flaw I find
In dressing of the leather,
I straightway whip my needle out,
And I tack 'em close together.

Sometimes I am a cook,
And in Fleet Street I do dwell, sir,
At the sign of the Sugar-loaf,
As it is known full well, sir.
And if a dainty lass comes by,
And wants a dainty bit, sir,
I take four quarters in my arms
And put them on my spit, sir.

In weavering and in fulling,
I have such passing skill, sir.
And underneath my weavering-beam,
There stands a fulling-mill, sir.
To have good wives' displeasure,
I would be very loath, sir,
The water runs so near my hand,
It over-thicks my cloth, sir.

Sometimes I am a shoemaker,
And work with silly bones, sir.
To make my leather soft and moist,
I use a pair of stones, sir.
My lasts for, and my lasting sticks
Are fit for every size, sir.
I know the length of lasses' feet
By handling of their thighs, sir.

The tanner's trade I practice
Sometimes amongst the rest, sir.
Yet I could never get a hair
Of any hide I dressed, sir.
For I have been tanning of a hide
This long seven years and more, sir,
And yet it is as hairy still
As ever it was before, sir.

Sometimes I am a tailor,
And work with thread that's strong, sir.
I have a fine, great needle
About two handfuls long, sir.
The finest seamstress in this town
That works by line or leisure
May use my needle at a pinch
And do themselves great pleasure.

A BALLAD OF ALL THE TRADES

Another in the same vein.

Oh, the miller, the dusty, musty miller,
The miller that bear [meal] on his back,
He never goes to measure meal,
But his maid, but his maid, but his maid holds ope' the sack.

Oh, the baker, the bonny, bonny baker,
The baker that is so full of sin,
He never heats his oven hot,
But he thrusts, but he thrusts, but he thrusts his maiden in.

Oh, the brewer, the lusty, lusty brewer,
The brewer that brews ale and beer,
He never heats his liquor hot,
But he takes, but he takes, but he takes his maid by the gear.

Oh, the butcher, the bloody, bloody butcher,
The butcher that sells both beef and bone,
He never grinds his slaught'ring knife,
But his maid, but his maid, but his maid must turn his stone.

Oh, the weaver, the wicked, wicked weaver,
That followeth a weary trade,
He never shoots his shuttle right,
But he shoots, but he shoots, but he shoots first at his maid.

Oh, the barber, the neat and nimble barber,
Whose trade is ne'er the worse,
He never goes to wash and shave,
But he trims, but he trims, but he trims his maiden first.

Oh, the tailor, the fine and frisking tailor,
The tailor that gives so good regard,
He never goes to measure lace,
But his maid, but his maid, but his maid holds out his yard.

Oh, the blacksmith, the lusty, lusty blacksmith,
The best of all good fellows,
He never heats his iron hot,
But his maid, but his maid, but his maid must blow the bellows.

Oh, the tanner, the merry, merry tanner,
The tanner that draws good hides into leather,
He never strips himself to work,
But his maid, but his maid, but his maid and he's together.

Oh, the tinker, the sturdy, sturdy tinker,
The tinker that deals in all metal,
He never clencheth home a nail,
But his trull, but his trull, but his trull holds up the kettle.

A LUSTY YOUNG SMITH

Set to various tunes, this poem frequently was reprinted during the last years of the Seventeenth Century. The reason is clear enough.

A lusty young smith at his vise stood a-filing,
When to him a buxom young damsel came smiling,
And asked if to work at her forge he would go.-
"A match," quoth the smith, so away they went thither.
They stripped to go to it; 'twas hot work and hot weather.
She kindled a fire and soon made him blow.

Her husband she said, could scarce raise up his hammer;
His strength and his tools were worn out long ago.
If she got her [a] journeyman, could any [one] blame her?
"Look here," quoth our workman, "my tools are not so."

Red hot grew his iron as both did desire,
And he was too wise not to strike while 'twas so.
Quoth she, "What I get, I get out of the fire,
Then prithee, strike home, and redouble the blow."

Six times did his iron by vigorous heating
Grow soft in the forge in a minute or so.
As often 'twas hardened, still beating and beating,
But the more it was softened, it hardened more slow.

The smith then would go; quoth the dame full of sorrow,
"Oh, what would I give could my cuckold do so!
Good lad, with your hammer, come hither tomorrow,
But pray, can't you use it once more e'er you go?"

A TENEMENT TO LET

A whimsical description of a whim-wham in need of a lodger.

I have a tenement to let
I hope will please you all,
And if you'd know the name of it,
'Tis called Cunny Hall.

It's seated in a pleasant vale,
Beneath a rising hill.
This tenement is to be let
To whomsoe'er I will.

For years, for months, for weeks or days
I'll let this famous bow'r;
Nay, rather than a tenant want,
I'd let it for an hour.

There's round about a pleasant grove
To shade it from the sun,
And underneath is well water
That pleasantly does run.

When if you're hot, you may be cool'd,
If cold you may find heat;
It is a well-contrived spring
Not little nor too great.

The place is very dark by night,
And so it is by day,
But when you once are enter'd in,
You cannot lose your way.

And when you're in, go boldly on,
As far as e'er you can;
And if you reach to the house top,
You'll be where ne'er was man.

TOM TINKER

Another teasing song on the order of "A Friend of Mine," this manages to suggest most of the forbidden vocabulary of the period.

Tom Tinker's my true love, and I am his dear,
And I will go with him his budget to bear.
For of all the young men he has the best luck.
All the day he will fuddle, at night he will
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

With hammer on kettle, he tabbers all day.
At night he will tumble on strumil or hay.
He calls me his jewel, his delicate duck,
And then he will take up my smicket to
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

Tom Tinker, I say, was a jolly stout lad.
He tickled young Nancy and made her stark mad
To have a new rubbers with him on the grass.
By reason she knew that he had a good
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

There was an old woman; on crutches she came
To lusty Tom Tinker, Tom Tinker by name.
And though she was aged near threescore and five,
She kicked up her heels and resolved to
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

A beautiful damsel came out of the west,
And she was as jolly and brisk as the best.
She'd dance and she'd caper as wild as a buck,
And told Tom Tinker, she would have some
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

A lady she called him her kettle to mend,
And she resolved herself to attend.
Now as he stood stooping and mending the brass,
His breeches was torn and down hung his
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

Something she saw that pleased her well;
She called in the tinker and gave him a spell.
With pig, goose and capon, and good store of suck,
That he might be willing to give her some
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

He had such a trade that he turn'd me away.
Yet as I was going he caused me to stay.
So as towards him I was going to pass,
He gave me a slap in the face with his
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

I thought in my heart he had struck off my nose.
I gave him as good as he [gave] I suppose.
My words they were ready and wonderful blunt;
Quoth I, "I had rather been stabbed in my
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

I met with a butcher a-killing a calf.
I then stepped to him and cried out [for] half.
At this first denial, I fell very sick,
And he said it was all for a touch of his
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

I met with a fencer a-going to school.
I told him at fencing he was but a fool.
He had but three rapiers and they were all blunt,
And told him he should no more play at my
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

I met with a barber with razor and balls;
He fliggered and told me for all my brave calls,
He would have a stroke, and his words they were blunt.
I could not deny him the use of my
This way, that way, which way you will.
I am sure I say nothing that you can take ill.

I met with a fiddler a-fiddling aloud.
He told me he had lost the case of his croud.
I being good natured as I was wont
Told him he should make a case of my
This way, and that way, and which way you can,
For the fairest of women will lie with a man.

AN AMOROUS SONG

The occasion of a marriage or the image of the virgin brought to her bridal bed frequently evoked the best of the Restoration poets. And sometimes their worst.

See how fair and fine she lies
Upon her bridal bed;
No lady at the Court
So fit for the sport.
Oh, she looked so curiously white and red.
After the first and second time,
The weary bridegroom slacks his pace,
But "Oh," she cries, "come, come, my joy,
And cling thy cheek close to my face."
Tinkle, tinkle goes the bell under the bed,
Whilst time and touch they keep.
Then with a kiss,
They end their bliss,
And so fall fast asleep.

UP-TAILS ALL

Anything said about this would be superfluous.

Fly merry news among the crews
That love to hear of jests.
The oldest sport that e'er was us'd
Yet chiefly in request.
If any one do carp at thee,
Or do thee bawdy call,
Say thou dost write as they delight
Of up-tails all.

There hath a question been of late
Among the youthful sort:
What pastime is the pleasantest,
And what the sweetest sport?
And it hath been adjudged
As well by great as [by] small
That of all pastimes none is like
To up-tails all.

Bachelors will to this game,
And married men likewise;
Yea, wives, yea, maids, and widows
Will use it all their lives.
And old men they will have a snatch,
Although their game's but small;
Yet these old colts will have a bout
At up-tails all.

If it were unlawful,
Then lawyers were to blame.
And if it were un-Godly,
To priests it were a shame.
For they no doubt do use it,
Though it a vice they call,
Yet priests and lawyers both will play
At up-tails all.

It cannot be unwholesome;
Physicians do it use.
And if that it were noisome,
They would it then refuse.
And if it hurt the body,
Then sure their skill is small,
For why the best of these will play
At up-tails all?

Ladies love the pastime
And do the pleasure crave;
And if it were a base thing,
Then it they would not have.
But yet the fairest women
Will soonest for it call.
There is no she but that will play
At up-tails all.

If it were a costly thing,
Then beggars could not buy it.
And if it were a loathsome thing,
Then genteels would defy it.
But it is a sweet thing,
And pleasing unto all;
There is not one but that will play
At up-tails all.

PUSS IN A CORNER

"Puss" and "pussy" have been used as euphemisms for the female pudendum since at least the Seventeenth Century. While modern poets might not feel free to spin out verses about puss' smooth hair, and so on, the Restoration wits did.

To cullies and bullies
Of country and town,
Of manteau and gown,
To wearers and tearers
All Christian good people,
That live round Paul's steeple,
I'll tell you a pleasant case:
Hot headed I wedded
At age of threescore,
A flaunting young wanton
Eighteen and no more.
Of parents I sought her,
And money soon bought her.
I well might have had more grace.
For daily at table,
She'd pout and she'd squabble
And this still was all I got.
Whene'er I asked why,
She'd cry, "Pish, fie.
For gold nor apparel,
I never did quarrel,
But only you starve my cat."
A pretty young kitty
She had that could purr.
'Twas gamesome and handsome
And had a rare fur.
And straight up I took it,
And offered to stroke it
In hopes I should make it kind.

But louting and pouting,
It still was to me.
Though nature the creature
Designed should be free,
I played with its whiskers
And would have had discourse
But ah! it was dumb and blind.
When Chloris unquiet,
Who well knew its diet,
And found that I wanted that,
Cried, "Pray, run, fetch John.
He's the man that can.
When it does need it,
Best knows how to feed it,
Or gad you will starve my cat."
As fleet as my feet
Could convey me I sped
To Johnny who many
Times pussy had fed.
I told him my errand.
He wanted no warrant,
But hasted to show his skill.
He took it to stroke it,
And close in his lap,
He laid it to feed it,
And gave it some pap.
And with such a passion,
It took the collation,
Its belly began to fill.
And now within door is
So merry my Chloris.
She laughs and grows wonderous fat.
And I run for John,
Who's the man that can—
Though I'm at distance—
Give present assistance
To please her, and feed her cat.

A SONG REPRESENTING THE GOING OF A PAD

A "pad" is a well-trained, easily ridden horse. The poet imitates the rhythms of two different rides and all the various paces of his mounts in poetic meter.

When for air
I take my mare,
And mount her first,
Walk. She walks just thus:
Her head held low,
And motion slow;
With nodding, plodding,
Wagging, jogging,
Dashing, splashing,
Snorting, starting,
Whimsically she goes.
Then whip stirs up
Trott. Trott, trott, trott.
Ambling then with easy slight,
Pace. She wriggles like a bride at night;
Her shuffling hitch
Regales my britch,
Trott. Whilst trott, trott, trott, trott,
Brings on the gallop,
Gallop. The gallop, the gallop,
The gallop, and then a short
Trott. Trott, trott, trott, trott,
Straight again up and down,
Gallop. Up and down, up and down,
Till she comes home with a trott,
Trott. When night dark grows.

Just so Phyllis,
Fair as lillies
Walk. As her face is,
Has her paces.
And in bed too,
Like my pad too:
Nodding, plodding,
Wagging, jogging,
Dashing, splashing,
Flirting, spurting.
Trott. Heart thumps pitt, patt,
Trott, trott, trott, trott.
Pace. Ambling then her tongue gets loose,
Whilst wriggling near I press more close.
"Ye Devil," she cries,
I'll tear your eyes."
Trott. When main seized,
Bum squeezed,
Gallop. I gallop, I gallop, I gallop, I gallop.
Trott. And trott, trott, trott, trott,
Straight again up and down,
Gallop. Up and down, up and down,
Till the last jerk with a trott,
Trott. Ends our love chase.

THE OLD FUMBLER

The most successful songwriting team of the Restoration was undoubtedly the combination of Thomas D'Urfey and the famous composer Henry Purcell (1659-1695). Purcell's many song settings are no longer performed, not because they are musically indifferent, but because the texts are so frequently bawdy. This is an example of the poetry D'Urfey handed to Purcell for musical accompaniments.

Smug, rich and fantastic, old fumbler was known,
That wedded a juicy, brisk girl of the town.
Her face like an angel, fair, plump and a maid,
Her lute well in tune too, could he but have played.
But lost was his skill, let him do what he can;
She finds him in bed a weak, silly old man.
He coughs in her ear, " 'Tis in vain to come on.
Forgive me, my dear. I'm a silly old man."

She laid his dry hand on her snowy white breast,
And from those white hills gave a glimpse of the best.
But ah! what is age when our youth's but a span?
She found him an infant instead of a man.
"Ah, pardon," he'd cry, "that I'm weary so soon.
You've let down my bass; I'm no longer in tune.
Lay by the dear instrument, prithee, lie still.
I can play but one lesson, and that I play ill."

SONG FOR A YOUNG GIRL

The Restoration theater was a brawling tumult, racy and urbane, the perfect mirror of the age. The plays of the period are now little known, largely because they can hardly be edited for popular—that is, parlor—sensibilities. Literally gathering dust on library shelves, some of the best theater and finest wit in the English language moulders. Restoration drama was constantly interlarded with popular songs, in much the same fashion of today's musical comedy. The songs did not advance the action of the drama on stage, but rather served as a comment on the proceedings. These are a handful from various plays.

Young I am, and yet unskilled
How to make a lover yield,
How to keep, or how to gain,
When to love and when to feign.

Take me, take me, some of you,
While I yet am young and true,
E're I can my soul disguise,
Heave my breast and roll my eyes.

Stay not till I learn the way
How to lie and to betray.
He that has me first is blest,
For I may deceive the rest.

Could I find a blooming youth,
Full of love and full of truth,
Brisk, and of a jaunty mein,
I should long to be fifteen.

Anonymous, *Love Triumphant or Nature Will Prevail,* 1694

THERE'S NOTHING SO FATAL AS WOMAN

There's nothing so fatal as woman
To hurry a man to his grave.
You may think, you may plot,
You may sigh like a sot.
She uses you more like a slave.

But a bottle, although it be common,
The cheats of the fair will undo.
It will drive from your head
The delights of the bed.
He that's drunk is not able to woo.

Anonymous, *The Fool's Preferment or the Three Dukes of Dunstable,* 1688

VIRGINS ADMONISHED

Ever the wily suitor courts the maid, wearing down her resistance with sweet compliments and insinuating persuasion.

Pretty nymph, why always blushing?
If thou lovest why art thou so coy?
In thy cheeks these roses flushing
Show thee fearful of thy joy.
What is man that thou shouldst dread
To change with him a maidenhead?
At first all virgins fear to do it,
And but trifle away their time,
And still unwilling to come to it,
In foolish whining spend their time;
But when they once have found the way,
Then they are for it night and day.

BALLAD

A soldier, and a sailor,
A tinker, and a tailor
Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
To make a maid a wife, sir,
Whose name was Buxom Joan.
For now the time was ended,
When she no more intended,
To lick her lips at men, sir,
And gnaw the sheets in vain, sir,
And lie o' nights alone.

The soldier swore like thunder
He loved her more than plunder;
And showed her many a scar, sir,
That he had brought from far, sir,
With fighting for her sake.
The tailor thought to please her
With off'ring her his measure.
The tinker too with mettle
Said he could mend her kettle,
And stop up every leak.

But while these three were prating,
The sailor slyly waiting
Thought if it came about, sir,
That they should all fall out, sir,
He might then play his part.
And just e'er as he meant, sir,
To loggerheads they went, sir,
And then he let fly at her
A shot 'twixt wind and water
That won his fair maid's heart.

John Eccles (?), *Love for Love*, 1695

AN ACROSTIC ON SOMETHING OR OTHER

One of the most curious collections of poetry published during the Eighteenth Century was the two-part *The Merry Thought* (1731), subtitled "The Glass-Window and Bog House Miscellany." This was a collection of epigraphy—the rhymes scrawled on out-house walls and scratched on glass windows with diamonds. Most of it is no better and no worse than the ephemera janitors continually scrub from the walls of public restrooms now; some of it is distinguished by its wit.

Commodious for a haven made
Under a rising bank,
Nature has fixed a place of trade
To men of any rank.
Riddle my ree, &
And read the four first letters and you'll see.

The riddle was dated to 1708, and the majority of poems in the collection date from the first twenty years of the Eighteenth Century.

Betty Careless, her prayers: From her chambers in Drury Lane, on a wall, written with a piece of charcoal

Grant us good lusty men, ye gracious powers!
Or else stop up those craving things of ours!

Two more from the same collection suggesting that the quality of folk epigraphy hasn't changed much in some 250 years.

When I lay with my bouncing Nell,
I gave her an inch and she took an ell.
But I think in this case, it was damnable hard
When I gave her an inch, she'd want more than a yard.

Oh! that I were a turd, a turd,
Hid in this secret place,
That I might see my Betsy's arse
Though she shit in my face.

(1703)

The following poem was found on a Wainscot, at the Crown at Harlow.

Whilst Lady Mary slept at ease,
Secure from jealousy and fleas,
Her lord with vig'rous love inclined
To kiss her maid, and ease his mind.
The maiden did not long resist,
But gently yielded to be kissed,
And in the dance of lovers move,
With sprightly bounds to show her love.
When in the height of am'rous fire
She cried, "My lord, I've one desire,
Tell me, my peer; tell me, my lord;
Tell me, my life, upon your word:
Who does it best, my dame or me?"
And then she fell in ecstasy.
My lord, in fire of his love,
Called her his minion, turtle dove.
"You have the only art to please."
All this he swore upon his knees.
"Your dame is like a log of wood;
Her love is never half so good."
"My lord," says she, "all that I know;
For all the world has told me so."

(1717)

THE BUTTON HOLE

Another riddle, this one to complement "A Man's Yard." Apparently first printed in 1720, it probably dates from a much earlier period, when such "trick" poetry was in vogue.

I'm a hole, though too narrow
When first I am tried.
Yet the thing I was made for
Can stretch me out wide.
Though at the first entrance
Perhaps I may tease ye,
Soon after I commonly
Prove for to please ye.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

I'm long in shape
And my depth can't be found,
And when I'm stretched open,
My form is more round.
Though I'm nothing but mouth,
Yet no teeth can you find.
I am chiefly before,
Though I'm sometimes behind.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

And as for my color,
If e'er you have seen
The whimsical coat
Of the stage harlequin,
It's white and it's red,
And it's black and it's brown,
Not a color on that
But on me may be found.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

I was formed in an instant,
But was not complete.
There was something still wanting,
They found not out yet.
Then the king and the state
Took me into their care,
And declared with one voice
They would choose me with hair.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

To modest folks' ears
I would give no offence,
Though the meaning is double
You may draw from hence.
You may think what you will,
But my song's not obscene,
For 'tis naught but a button hole,
Faith, that I mean.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

The Button Hole Garland (1720)

THE SILENT FLUTE

The last of the collections containing Restoration songs which achieved any great popularity was a six volume omnibus published in 1729-1731. By this time, the roistering spirit of the Restoration had waned, and much of the poetry included in *The Musical Miscellany* was pawky stuff at best. A handful of pieces, most of them written in the last forty years of the previous century, flashed with the old wit.

As Damon late with Chloe sat,
They talked of am'rous blisses.
Kind things he said which she repaid
In pleasing smiles and kisses.
With tuneful tongue of love he sung,
She thanked him for his ditty,
But said once she heard him say
"The flute was mighty pretty."

Young Damon, who her meaning knew,
Took out his pipe to charm her,
And while he strove with wanton love
And sprightly airs to warm her,
She begged the swain to play one strain
In all the softest measure
Whose killing sound would sweetly wound
And make her die with pleasure.

Eager to do 't, he takes the flute
And ev'ry accent traces.
Love trickling through his fingers flew
And whisper'd melting graces.
He did his part with wondrous art,
Expecting praises after,
But she instead of falling dead
Burst out in a laughter.

Taking the hint as Chloe meant,
Said he, "My dear, be easy.
I have a flute, which though 'tis mute,
May play a tune to please ye."
Then down he laid the charming maid.
He found her kind and willing.
He played again and though each strain
Was silent, yet 'twas killing.

Fair Chloe soon approved the tune,
And vowed he played divinely.
"Let's have it o'er," said she, "once more.
It goes exceeding finely.
The flute is good that's made of wood,
And is, I own, the neatest;
Yet ne'ertheless, I must confess,
The silent flute's the sweetest."

Musical Miscellany, III (1730)

THE GALLANT SCHEMER'S PETITION TO THE HONORABLE MRS. F———S

"Mrs. F." is lost to history, but her beauty lingers on in the poet's pleading.

By the mole on your bubbies so round and so white,
By the mole on your neck, where my arms would delight,
By whatever mole else you have got out of sight,
I prithee now hear me, dear Molly.

By the kiss just a-starting from off your moist lips,
By the delicate up-and-down jut of your hips,
By the tip of your tongue which all tongues out-tips,
I prithee now hear me, dear Molly.

By the down on your bosom on which my soul dies,
By the thing of all things which you love as your eyes,
By the thoughts you lie down with, and those when you rise,
I prithee now hear me, dear Molly.

By all the soft pleasures a virgin can share,
By the critical minute no virgin can bear,
By the question I burn for to ask, but don't dare,
I prithee now hear me, dear Molly.

The words are credited to "The Earl of——." The tune is by Mr. J. Sheeles. *Musical Miscellany,* VI (1731)

WHITE THIGHS

Long after the Restoration came to a close, the poetry of the period was still popular—if censored. Some of it was printed and reprinted, and there were echoes of its erotic wit for many years after. This is one such, attributed to Thomas, 6th Earl of Haddington, about 1735.

Let the world run its course of capricious delight;
I none of its vanities prize.
More substantial the joys I experience each night
From a touch 'twixt my charmer's white thighs.

Poets praise Chloe's shape, her complexion, her hair,
Coral lips, pearly teeth, and fine eyes.
A fig for them all; they can never compare
To my charmer's elastic white thighs.

What care I for Phyllis, Maria, and Jane?
Their beauties may draw one's surprise.
Let others enjoy them—content I remain,
Sole lord of thy lovely white thighs.

If aught can entice me, or aught can allure,
My slumbering passions to rise,
Or aught kindle up my desires, be sure
'Tis the sight of those snowy white thighs.

When I revel, dear love, in thy heavenly charms,
The joys of the gods I despise,
Nor envy great Mars, though in Venus' arms,
Whilst embracing thy beautiful thighs.

Believe me, my dear, there is nothing on earth
Which so fondly, so madly I prize
As that fountain of bliss, where delight takes its birth
Which is placed 'twixt thy parting white thighs.

Of Ganymede's beauties we ofttimes have heard,
And how Jove buggered him in the skies.
No envy have I, nor care I a turd,
Whilst possessing such exquisite thighs.

The arse of my love is delightful to see.
Its plumpness rejoiceth the eyes;
Her lily-white belly is heaven to me,
But, ye Gods, what are these to her thighs!

Ane Pleasant Garland of Sweet Scented Flowers, 1835

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